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Harry Truman as Flop

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The Educator as Wimp

THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR®

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Walter Berns: How to Talk to the Russians

David L. Wilkinson: The Founding Fathers and Cable TV

Herb Greer: Middle Eastern Intrigues from Richard Grenier and John Le Carré

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EDITED BY R. EMMETT TYRRELL, JR.

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Rising 30

In October 1983 ENCOUNTER will be thirty years old. Off-hand we can't think of any comparable journal in modern times that's lasted that long (in its original guise anyway). The money runs out, the circulation runs down, the editor gets bored, the ideas look jaded—that's the usual pattern, and the reason why so many fine journals have come and gone.

Well, ENCOUNTER is still there, and that can't be just a fluke. Granted the money has sometimes come perilously close to running out; but the circulation is still pretty healthy and the editors don't seem to be bored. No magazine survives for thirty years if its ideas don't move with the times. It's certainly not constantly noticed and quoted, as ENCOUNTER is.

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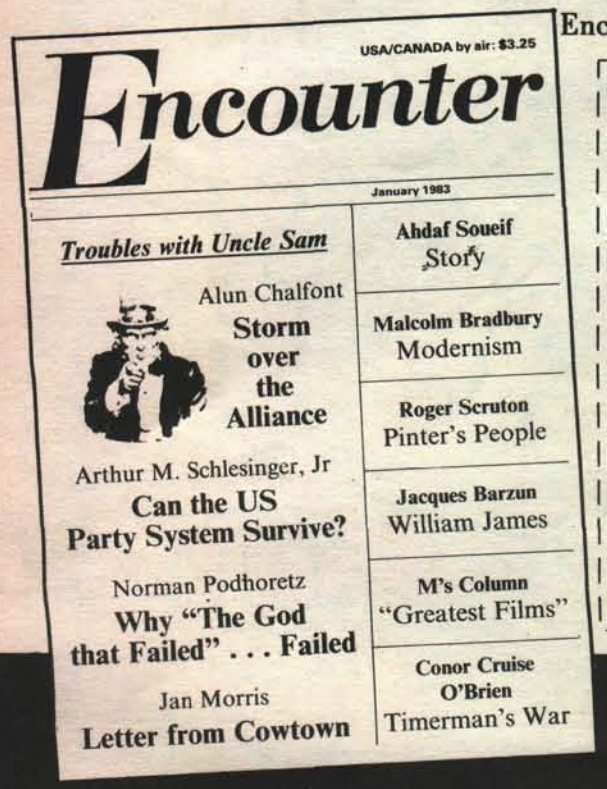

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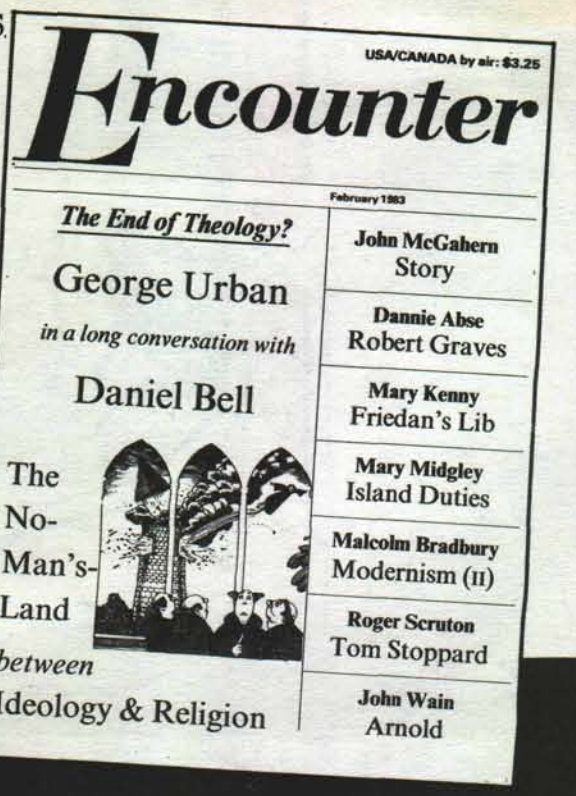

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

•*The Diaries of Adolph Hitler*! *The Diaries of Adolph Hitler*? Yes, May was the month in which hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of European and American journalists and professors wrestled with the vexed question of whether the late Führer actually had managed to scratch out sixty-two volumes of diaries heretofore unnoticed by the legions of scholars who have pored over his celebrated life. West Germany's *Stern* magazine had paid nearly $4 million to spectral agents for these documents; and who could doubt the perspicacity of *Stern*, a magazine distinguished for its splenetic anti-Yankism and its toney leftishness. The Adolph who emerges from *The Diaries* is a kind of Hun Hamlet: perplexed by stubborn Anglo deviousness, somewhat befooled by his colleagues' uncharitable acts. This is a mellower, more caring Führer than the no-nonsense type established in earlier scholarship. In sum and in fine, what steps from the haze of yesteryear is a preposterous persona, the kind of complicated wimp that we in the West have come to imagine as plausible and universal particularly amongst the male of the species. Hitler diaries, indeed; here is still more evidence of how our media lust for the bizarre and improbable, and doubtless millions of readers will all the days of their lives now believe that, "Yes, there probably was something to that *Hitler Diaries* story." You can be sure that Mr. Gore Vidal believes that there is something to it; or, as with so many other members of our gimcrack intelligentsia, he dearly wishes that there were.

•The Hon. Charles C. Diggs, Jr., fresh from seven months in the jug for his congressional kickback ventures, received a bachelor of arts degree from Howard University. The mortician-turned-congressman-turned-corpse was a political science major in the university's alternative educational program, fittingly enough named "Without Walls." Another U.S. diplomat has been bounced from a Communist country for conducting pornographic readings. This time the progressive government was that of Afghanistan, though we remain in the dark as to what lewd readings the fellow had with him, possibly the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. And the guitar on which rock virtuoso Mr. David Crosby composed his 1969 masterpiece, *Guinevere*, has been pilfered from his van, an incalculable loss.

•On May 1, Poland's government failed to scotch demonstrations by multitudes of mysteriously disgruntled proletarians, though police did manage to beat to death several of those whom they detained. On May 2, the Republic's Roman Catholic bishops put the final moronic touches on an anti-nuclear weapons manifesto that is to be used as a pastoral "teaching document" for their flocks, presumably with the same success as their teaching documents on hellish contraception, a teaching diligently ignored by more than three-fourths of the American faithful. Missiles, of course, even if they resemble the shape of prophylactics, are a lot larger and much more dangerous, so the bishops may have some success. Politically they already have made great strides, and by month's end their geopolitical pontifications had even gained the support of Madalyn Murray O'Hair, founder and director of the American Atheist Center, who endorsed their position "100 percent." Perhaps the convergence theory works not only with superpowers but also with jackasses. To the doctrine of Papal Infallibility Roman Catholics now must add a bishops' corollary, to wit: if the Pope can never be wrong on some spiritual matters, the bishops can never be right on all practical matters. It is a thing to think about.

•From Huachuca City, Arizona comes evidence of still more American jobs' being taken over by illegal aliens. The Huachuca city government has brought in a team of three burros to replace the work crew that used to trim grass around the city's sewage treatment lagoons. In Knoxville, Tennessee an ugly row broke out between Mr. Harold Glasser, president of the Miss USA pageant, and Mr. Virgil Davis, president of the Ugly Club of Greater Knoxville, when Mr. Davis announced plans to auspicate his Ugliest of Ugly contest just two days before the fabulous Miss USA revue. Mr. Davis's contest was won by identical twins, Earl and Murl Householder, a corpulent couple of slobs who pantomimed a chanson on guitars made of toilet seat lids while spilling out of their women's swim suits. As for the winner of dyspeptic Mr. Glasser's contest, it is not the policy of this intellectual review to give publicity to sexism in any form.

•At Stanford University, liberal professors have commenced a campaign against one of the last vestiges of benightedness of Academe, the vicious Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace. Throughout May, such ornaments of American thought as Prof. John Manley of political science and Prof. Ronald Rebholz of English have sacrificed their usual springtime lucubrations on the sun deck in local saloons to circulate petitions calling for an "immediate inquiry on the relationship between the Hoover Institution and Stanford." Of the Hoover Institution's $8.4 million budget $2.7 million is provided by Stanford to finance the Hoover Library, and surely it could be put to better purposes, say, a really serious Gay Studies Program or a project to monitor political intolerance amongst conservative groups. In Savannah, Missouri, work proceeds on Mr. Lowell Davis's invaluable contribution to American sociological study, *How Many People Do You Meet in a Lifetime?* Mr. Davis is writing down the names of everyone he has met since the age of three. Thus far, ably assisted by wife Hazel, he has recalled 3,487 fascinating figures; and he has appended many scholarly annotations to the text, for instance: "Dick Edwards, he was quite a character" or "Leonard McKnight, fond of chicken gravy." Surely the liberals of Stanford will be able to find a place for this rising social historian once they rid Stanford of the diabolical Hoover Institution. But they best make haste; he is eighty-three.

•The Philistines were out in force at the University of California at Irvine when they got wind of a "simulated rape" performed by two nude but painted students, coupled outdoors before Prof. Jerry Anderson's "studio arts" class. "It [the simulated rape] was about gender roles in society and the problems they sometimes produce," Prof. Anderson informed the *Los Angeles Times*. "There has been a great deal of confusion afoot on this whole thing." Let the Stanford liberals not forget Prof. Anderson when they fill the vacated buildings of the Hoover Institution with new Aristotles.

•The economy continued to gain strength, and on May 13 the Federal Reserve reported that April's industrial production had leaped 2.1 percent, the largest monthly increase in almost eight years. The Syrians proved unwilling to go along with the Reagan Administration's plan for troop withdrawals, which Damascus described as "a grave threat to Syria's security"—a peculiar sort of security that, for it is apparently secured only by repeated military defeats. In Moscow there occurred the gravest threat to the regime since the Kronstadt mutiny of 1921. Twice across Radio Moscow's English-language broadcast Mr. Vladimir Danchev, a veteran announcer, read blatantly anti-Soviet accounts of the government's butcherings in Afghanistan. Then the fiend disappeared, and a Radio Moscow spokesman warily laid the rebellion to a "personal mistake," probably by Mr. Danchev who has evaporated.

•Mother's Day was observed with the customary poesy and melancholy, but this time there were also peace yawps, for instance from the odious Dr. Helen Caldicott, founder of Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament and the Physicians for Social Responsibility. Before an audience of several hundred at the Boston Childrens Museum Dr. Caldicott expatiated over her favorite subject interminably, ending one particularly lurid passage by shouting that "Our

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children know for a fact that they are not going to grow up. I'm going to make sure, bloody sure, they grow up and live to be 92." By this time small children were crying and asking to have their pants changed. Many parents and some bystanders were eager to oblige. Older kids were becoming indignant, and some of the museum's live exhibitions were bleating and stomping their hooves. Still Dr. Caldicott went on, "My drive is fear, fear for my kids," she hollered. Even her dupes were growing uneasy. "There aren't Communist babies," she roared. "There aren't capitalist babies. A baby is a baby is a baby." Finally she shut down. She looked relieved. A longtime *American Spectator* reader of Christian sensibility offered to change Dr. Caldicott's pants.

•Mr. Eric Hoffer passed on, as did Dr. Kenneth Clark and King Indris, Libya's last monarch. He was 93. At Poole harbor in southwest England Mr. Mike Spring set off intent on becoming the first paraplegic yachtsman to make a solo round-trip voyage to the Azores. Mr. Spencer Sawyer, the former Little League coach from Sacramento who trained his players to knock off banks, was sentenced to 30 years in federal prison and branded a "modern-day Fagin" by Sacramento's literary prosecuting officials. And in Olathe, Kansas inhabitants of the Johnson County Jail will no longer have to wash their own underwear, a penal practice that has been going on in those primitive parts from time out of mind, thanks to the local American Civil Liberties Union pests. The heroine of this blast for justice is Miss Claudia York, who crowed, "The underwear was not a constitutional question. It was just kind of tacky," tacky having become a nonce term of great popularity particularly with liberal aesthetes.

•Finally *The American Spectator* may have readers in the Vatican. The papal envoy to Britain, Archbishop Bruno B. Heim, suggested in a letter to the laity that British supporters of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament are either adherents of Soviet rapacity, blinkered idealists, or idiots.

—RET

CORRESPONDENCE

Tree Stumping

Robert Nisbet's otherwise adequate look at environmentalist silliness ["Modern Man and the Obsession," *TAS,* May 1983] was marred by silliness of its own. He wrote: "The greatest heresy preached in the Middle Ages was that of St. Francis and his followers. Had Franciscan pantheism prevailed utterly, the cost would have been nothing less than Western civilization."

To accuse St. Francis, a thoroughly orthodox Catholic, of pantheism is to misunderstand him entirely or to empty the word of all meaning. If Mr. Nisbet thinks St. Francis was a simpleton who spent his waking hours conversing with periwinkles, I suggest he begin his homework with G.K. Chesterton's biography of the saint.

Mr. Nisbet should be told that the Church does not canonize people who think a godlet lives under every rock.

—Karl Keating
San Diego, California

Why did Robert Nisbet have to spoil his brilliant article on "Modern Man and the Obsession" by citing Christianity as a parallel to environmentalsm (and socialism)? His argument tself showed that environmentalism s the most recent stage of that nan-centered liberalism of which earlier stages were Renaissance/Enightenment humanism, economic iberalism, and socialism—of all of which Christianity is the diametric opposite.

All liberalisms are elitist. Despite ious lip service to broader and roader swaths of humanity, their ffect has been to concentrate power nd control ever more narrowly. Now, as can readily be seen from rofessor Nisbet's piece, liberalism n its environmentalist (or deathvish) stage professes to serve all humanity by preserving nature, but actually the only ones to benefit are the affluent few—who themselves are in the process of being progressively pared down, until even these are excluded in the name of "sacred nature."

Environmentalism and socialism are on one side, Professor Nisbet. Christianity is on the other.

—Stephen B. Miles
Falls City, Nebraska

Robert Nisbet's review essay on environmentalism was excellent. Those who have had dealings with such agencies as the California Coastal Commission, and attended meetings of people whose aim is to "control" the coastlines not only of the United States but of the entire world, can understand what is going on in the name of protecting the environment. The movement so well started by Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot has been subverted.

Many thanks for printing Nisbet's excellent article.

—Edgar Bissantz
Santa Barbara, California

Who Thinks What?

Like everyone with a decent respect for good writing, I think that the opaque prose that is characteristic of psychiatrists—as well as other professionals—deserved the excoriation that Thomas S. Szasz gave it in your April issue ["Learned Psychotics"]. However, while we are on the subject, let us consider some of Mr. Szasz's absurd expressions as well. He tells us that ". . . no human being can know what another thinks . . ." It follows that reading Mr. Szasz's article—or anything else—is a waste of time; one still won't be able to know what he thinks. In that case it seems we are quite wrong to castigate the bombastic psychiatrists, for their prose is no more thoughtless than anyone else's. The clear implication of this statement is a sort of solipsism; I can know that I think but there is no ground for extending the compliment to anyone else.

Mr. Szasz may try to rescue himself from this position by introducing a distinction between what people think and their "linguistic expressions": we can know what people write and say but not what they think. This strikes me as a distinction without a difference. Whatever one's favorite epistemological theory, it has no bearing on the fact that when one hears or reads an intelligible sentence, one is fairly said to know what the person who said or wrote it thought. For Mr. Szasz to suggest otherwise is an offense against common sense. Even the psychiatrists he vilifies so remorselessly know better than that.

—Thomas Main
Managing Editor
The Public Interest
New York, New York

Deism and the English

Having recently published a book on the holy and the daemonic in eighteenth-century literature, I really must take exception to Stephen Miller's remark, in "Religion and the Intellectual" [*TAS,* April 1983], that most English writers of that age were Deists. Although Miller rightly excludes Samuel Johnson from his generalization, he has apparently succumbed to the clichés about the period popularized by Peter Gay and other "whig" critics.

In fact, only one major English writer was in any sense a Deist—Gibbon. Both Dryden and Swift despised and attacked Deism. Pope, a Roman Catholic all his life despite the discrimination then enforced, was greatly mortified when the natural theology of his *Essay on Man* was misinterpreted as Deistic. Defoe, Richardson, Smart, Cowper, were as far from Deism as a Christian can get, and Fielding was at most a latitudinarian. Readers of this journal will know where Burke stood, Whig though he was. Blake scorned the Deists as much as he did the jejunely pious, and Hume was too skeptical to be one. And then it was the century of the great hymns: Watts, the Wesleys. Boswell was too much the gadfly to be anything very long, but a Deist he never was. Austen was too sensible.

The Enlightenment never took hold in England as it did in France, and the fairest flowers of English Deism must be sought among the likes of the third earl of Shaftesbury or Bolingbroke—not, after all, very hardy perennials.

—R.D. Stock
Department of English
University of Nebraska
Lincoln, Nebraska

Your Tax Dollars at Work

Rita Kramer's article on Marva Collins ["Marva Collins and American Public Education," *TAS,* April 1983] was informative and refreshing, but I feel that on one point she gives too much to the enemy.

On page 11 the author states that "more damaging" were charges that Marva Collins, a foe of special education programs for minorities, accepted $69,000 from CETA in order to start her school. Well, good for her! . . . I have no doubt that Marva Collins was right in taking that money, just as she is right in deploring such programs in general. As a taxpayer, I am delighted to learn that *someone* has put some of my money to good use. . . .

—Russell W. Martin
Orange, California

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EDITORIAL

IN FOREIGN PARTS

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

In Sen. Christopher J. Dodd's now widely celebrated rebuttal of the President's speech on Central America only one statement stung me as perhaps plausible, to wit: the senator's claim that he had been to backward regions and seen for himself how poverty breeds revolution. Had I spent any time in such remote parts? No sir, I had not. So, Senator Dodd, I have rectified the situation; last month, I tapped *The American Spectator*'s chief foreign correspondent, Mr. Taki Theodoracopulos, and told him to pack all the requisite travel equipment, ointments, tonics, and anti-malarials. Together we traveled to one of those little lands where as a Peace Corps volunteer Senator Dodd learned the elements of New Age statecraft. We went to Monte Carlo.

There was a grand prix motor race there, and we went down to see firsthand how the guerrilla movement fares. As Taki observed, conditions in Monte Carlo support Senator Dodd's thesis 100 percent. There is very little poverty and almost no guerrilla activity. Perhaps the left-wing Democrats now crippling our foreign policy in Central America could arrange grand prixes for Nicaragua and El Salvador. Yet how does one put on such a wide-open affair as a grand prix in a place like Marxist-Leninist Nicaragua?

I see Senator Dodd, even now, ensconced with his Third World advisers planning the Managua Grand Prix. The Ferraris and Renaults shall be stripped of all frivolous kapitalist advertisements, bedizened instead with wholesome revolutionary exhortations; once the checkered flag has fallen it is off to the presidential palace and the victory ball, the Sandinists having decorously left their AK-47s in the cloakroom, the local members of the Chamber of Commerce having sworn to refrain from lewd references to the profit motive; all the palaver is of parks and schools and day-care centers. This vision is an old favorite with left-wing Democrats: unimpeded by CIA plots, the Marxist-Leninist regime turns "moderate," prosperous, harmless to the United States or any living thing.

It is of course a pipe dream. It has never taken place anywhere on this diverse and occasionally amusing orb. Yet somehow the left-wing Democrats see all Marxist-Leninist regimes as abounding with potential friends. They hear of leftist revolution in the jungles and envision young men and women sitting by late-night campfires talking of the libraries they will build once the last agent of the *ancien régime* has been reeducated, strumming big Gibson guitars, and singing old Joan Baez songs, the kind that supplied so much inner warmth to Senator Dodd and his cohorts when they were waging America's youth revolution in the glorious 1960s.

Actually the prerequisite for prosperity in Central America is political stability. In the 1960s and early 1970s the economies of the region were expanding robustly. What brought them a cropper was OPEC and the ensuing worldwide recession. Then the noble revolutionaries began their butcherings, butcherings that the left-wing Democrats ignore whenever they wax eloquent on anti-revolutionary savagery in Central America. Life became more dangerous.

If the Marxist-Leninists win, kiss *au revoir* to grand prixes or to any other kind of economic elixir in the region. After all, is there any Marxist paradise on earth that is not an economic shambles? Cuba? Russia? Poland? Hungary and East Germany, we are told; so why do those countries need all the border guards? If the left-wing Democrats now rendering impotent American foreign policy with the same discredited analyses they applied to Angola and Southeast Asia before these went Communist in 1975 were serious about bringing economic growth to Central America, they would not allow a Communist takeover.

With the Panama Canal so close and American cities well within missile-range, Central America is indeed within our sphere of influence. There is still time to end the violence, and history has shown repeatedly that the only way to end the violence of Marxist-Leninists is with superior power. Ask Lech Walesa. □

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*

MASTERS OF DISASTER

Last month the National Elementary School Chess championship slipped from the grasp of New York City's Hunter College Elementary School, which did not seem right. The Hunter College Elementary School is populated by children of the New York intelligentsia. They were beaten by a team from Indianapolis, Indiana, a team composed of inner-city kids with no Ph.D.'s in their lineages, a team billed as "The Masters of Disaster"! Were the eggheads from New York victims of street-gang mayhem? Not at all, they were victims of persistence, that incalculable element in the human spirit that allows for marvels in the face of all sociological findings to the contrary.

The element flickers and flares irregularly but, when it does, it flickers and flares without regard to race, color, creed, or national origin, as the phrase has it. The Masters of Disaster are black, and for one reason or another black kids are not supposed to be chess champions. Nor for that matter are poor kids, nor Hoosier kids. Thus there are a lot of anomalies here worthy of our attention.

One is the question of race. Decades have elapsed since the civil rights movement carried the day, yet we are, alas, no closer to the goal of a color-blind society, a goal which any serious-minded student of human nature knows must be realized for enduring racial harmony. The complexities of race in America are such that only a genius would attempt to discuss it wisely, and he would need far more space available to him than a mere column. Here there is only space to say that we shall continue to depreciate human achievement as long as we look at Americans as whites and blacks or, for that matter, Poles or WASPs. And there are good biological reasons to drop these categories—racial and ethnic particularity is less and less possible in a land like ours, and according to our ideals it is less and less creditable.

Social science has told us much that is true about human beings, but it has also told us some things that are palpably untrue and certainly it has diminished the wonder of human achievement by insisting on quantifiable explanations for human behavior. Elements that cannot be quantified get short shrift in social science, and persistence or willpower are such elements. They are also the elements chiefly responsible for such achievements as were attained last month by the Masters of Disaster.

Two-and-a-half years ago a fifth grade science teacher at Indianapolis's School 27, because he like

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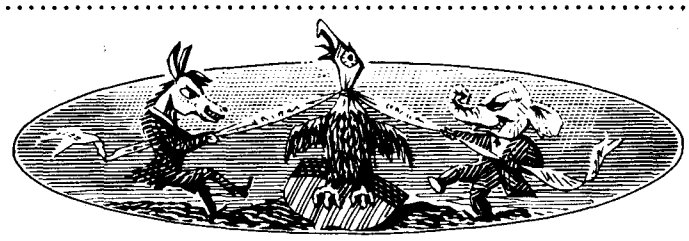
chess and the students around him, suggested that the kids play chess. Adepts of the social sciences might have considered this absurd, and their charts and statistics would back them up. When the fledgling team members grew mutinous after ten minutes of practice, the social scientists might again have pointed to their statistics; and when the kids got flattened in competition the social scientists could have pulled out all their cant about endangering the fragile self-images of poor blacks.

The kids at School 27 did indeed get flattened, hence their now forbidding nickname, Masters of Disaster. Yet they were not so fragile. The aforementioned unquantifiable elements seemed to be activated by defeat, and elementary school kids who could not sit still for ten minutes became kids who trained two-and-a-half hours nightly, five nights a week, and on Saturdays, for two years. Visions of excellence did not intimidate them but goaded them.

How does one explain it? Some say it is because these kids are street tough. Others say it is because chess is all they had to do. The explanations run from the sensible to the bizarre, but one thing we can all agree on is that these chess players had the desire to persist through arduous practices and through defeats. Today this desire to achieve is always undervalued, yet it is essential to all human endeavor.

The question is how does one instill it in young people? Is it luck or a gift? In Chicago, one of the Republic's most successful teachers of inner-city children, Marva Collins, insists that the desire to achieve is the result of devoted teachers holding high expectations for themselves and their students rather than low expectations. She puts the burden on teachers first, then students. I believe she is right. That is why congratulations are in order not only for the chess players of School 27 but also for their coaches who no longer have to teach their charges how to cope with being patronized in defeat but rather with being celebrated in victory. The latter condition is always more dangerous to the human spirit. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



THE BISHOPS' BRAIN

by Tom Bethell

In the press release it was billed as a "debate." Did you know that Catholic churches put out press releases and hold televised debates with parish priests talking about such things as "a return to a MIRVed world," "vertical proliferation," and "strategic implications for superpower relations"? Let the record show that in May 1983 St. Peter's Church in the nation's capital held such a debate, heralded by a press release headlined: "Bishops' Top Adviser To Appear In Capitol Hill Debate."

That was a reference to Rev. J. Bryan Hehir, a parish priest in Falls Church, Virginia, and director of the Office of Justice and Peace at the U.S. Catholic Conference in Washington, D.C. According to one or two bishops, Hehir actually wrote the recent Bishops' Letter, 44,000 words long, on nuclear weapons and deterrence. Since then he has attained a kind of celebrity as a behind-the-scenes manipulator of Roman Catholic bishops—the sort who over a period of years were bullied into thinking they were "irrelevant." Having been bullied for so long they are now only too happy to have someone like Hehir whisper "peace & justice" in their ears to make them relevant again. (Hehir has been photographed whispering into the ear of Washington Archbishop James Hickey, for example, while Hickey was testifying before Congress. Hickey seems to be a soft touch for the peace & justice crowd. He gives sermons in which the words "grow" and "growth" occur two or three times a sentence. Perhaps one day he will tell us what these veiled, ideologically charged words mean.)

Rev. Hehir (pronounced "hair") is an intelligent, fast-talking cleric of leftist persuasion. He specializes in ambiguity—rather odd, one might think, for a parish priest. (He calls himself a "radical centrist.") When Rep. Henry Hyde asked him whether he thought Christianity and Marxism were compatible, Hehir said that this was "a much disputed question." Likewise, "it is too early to make a real judgment on liberation theology," he told a reporter in Washington. He is fluent in the by-now increasingly exposed verbal camouflage of the contemporary Left: commitment, challenge, conscience, compassion, coalition, community, change, and, of course, concern. He's big on initiatives and negotiations (and let's not forget global interdependence), and a protégé of Stanley Hoffmann, the Harvard ambiguity specialist.

In the church press release Hehir got top billing—above a senator, a congressman, and the former heads of the Central and Defense Intelligence agencies. No doubt this was correct news judgment, too. Hehir was the man to watch. This was to be his "first major public appearance" since the Bishops Conference in Chicago, as though he were some Hollywood star or Las Vegas performer. At the Bishops Conference, remember, the Catholic hierarchy fell into line with the media and the academy (not to mention Moscow) by saying we should "halt," not "curb," the production of nuclear weapons, and then seemed to think it was due credit for bravery because the Reagan Administration disagreed. The bishops had become relevant at last.

Their pose was one of heroic independence. But their wordy document was filled with an unedifying cloud of clerical evasions, omissions, and quarter truths. Behind the episcopal front lurked the church's by-now thoroughly leftist bureaucracy, and there, in its midst, sat Father Hehir, with his fast patter about a MIRVed world. You see, people like Hehir tend to win political battles in an institution like the Catholic Church because traditionalist clergymen by definition are not interested in learning whether MIRVing is a good or a bad thing. They are more interested in sin, for example, and their devil does not come in the guise of technology, as seems to be the case with our recently relevant bishops. As a result, the position of the church emerges as misleadingly skewed toward political activism.

St. Peter's Church was already packed full by 8 p.m. Some of the people in the pews seemed vaguely familiar, and with a sinking feeling I began to suspect that this was in part the same group I had seen at last month's IPS reunion—an itinerant flock of nuclear disarmers and all-purpose leftists ready to show up at a few hours' notice and cheer their heads off the minute someone said "growth," "commitment to change," or "peace & justice." Here they all were, wedged into the pews, perhaps eagerly waiting for Hehir to tell them tonight that the arms race was sinful. Evidently this was something more than a gathering of curious parishioners. The press release said: "Contact: Bill Hinkes," followed by the telephone number of New Jersey Congressman Frank Guarinini's office.

The church has been turned into a big TV studio, with bright lights, cable TV on hand, those familiar bundles of electric cords taped to the floor, and—wouldn't you know it—a bearded priest sitting on a table in back, swinging his legs, and advertising his caringperson status. "The Poor Have Suffered Enough" said the button on his lapel.

In front of the altar was a table with microphones and in the center sat the gaunt, intense figure of Bryan Hehir. To one side were his supporters, former CIA head William Colby and Senator Patrick Leahy, to the other

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his opponents General Daniel O. Graham and Rep. Dan Lungren. Senator Leahy had showed up to talk about the immorality of destructive capability, despite his own 100-percent pro-abortion voting record. As I came in I was handed a piece of paper calling Leahy's appearance in the church "a scandal to Catholics" in view of this record. Let the record show that the leafleteer, a perfectly respectable Senate aide, was told to stop by a church usher, none other than the aforementioned congressional aide, Bill Hinkes.

Later on, to the accompaniment of much discontented rustling and sighing from the pews, a bold questioner asked Leahy: "As a United States senator who votes consistently not only in favor of abortion, but also in favor of subsidies to increase the practice of abortion, don't you feel that you have a very serious credibility problem coming into a Catholic church and preaching on the value and dignity of human life?"

Leahy "concurred" that abortion is a "very, very serious evil in this country," but "disagreed" with people who "say they are against abortion" and then "vote against money" for welfare and birth control pills. Let the record reflect his concluding creepie-crawlie comment: "We will stop abortion when we change those things in society that make abortion a more attractive alternative than life."

This evoked a steady downpour of respectful applause from the Rent-a-Crowd Left.

Hehir started off the debate by stressing a new relationship between technology and morality—a dubious proposition, of course. ("The nature of nuclear weapons . . . has impacted international politics in ways that create very specifically a new moral question.") He said nothing about the Soviet Union and the likelihood that it constitutes the greatest threat to world peace in history, this because its ideology requires its rulers to make constant warfare on their subjects, and on all other nations not under Communist domination. The summary of the Bishops' Letter handed out in church created, instead, the opposite impression that *we* were the greater threat. ("We may not forget that the United States was the first to build and use [nuclear weapons].") Everything that Hehir and his episcopal mouthpieces say leads one to suppose that the elected Reagan is a greater threat to world peace than the gang in the Kremlin.

Hehir told the crowd that we couldn't be the first to use nuclear weapons, and he didn't describe any circumstances under which a retaliatory use would be permissible. But, he added—vintage Hehir, this—"If you ask me does it rule out any use of nuclear weaponry under any circumstances, the Letter never says that. There is a centimeter of ambiguity. And on that centimeter of ambiguity the deterrence . . ."

"Centimeter of ambiguity? That's the way we get out of contracts and so on," said Rep. Dan Lungren from California. "We refer to them in the law as weasel words." (Here a cheer arose from a counterhive faction.)

Then we heard from William Colby. By the way, can somebody please tell me how someone so evidently weak and unsympathetic toward his own country came to be head of the CIA? As it happened, he kind of put his foot in it by saying: "The nuclear weapon today is unusable. Its devastating effect and the certainty of retaliation makes it impossible for any government to contemplate using it."

Oh? Certainty of retaliation? Any government? What if we all listen to the ventriloquizing bishops, and the Soviets conclude that this Hehir

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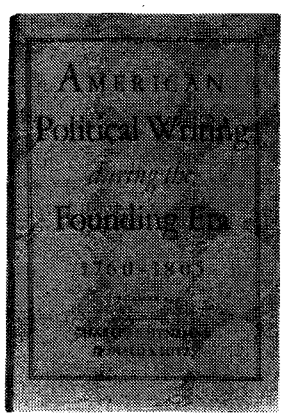

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fellow really has made an impact, so much so that the Americans wouldn't dare retaliate against a Soviet first-use? It then does become possible for one government to contemplate using nuclear weapons.

The moderator Gordon Peterson, a local TV anchorman, indirectly raised this point, wondering if the Letter might be construed as a sign of weakness on our part. Hehir's answer demonstrated the weakness, indeed the irresponsibility, of his and the bishops' position.

"I can't conceive how Soviet policy makers would perceive this as weakness on our government's part," he said. "The thrust of the Letter is to say that this country and the Soviets share a common problem, the common problem of the survival of both our nations and maybe the survival of parts of the northern hemisphere and maybe all of it. Secondly, if silence is regarded as a strength in the face of that kind of moral problem, then that's a curious definition of rationality, patriotism, and reasonable foreign policy to me. My answer is that there is strength in bringing the people who are the targets in the midst of this possible exchange into the discussion."

Notice the way Hehir makes it sound as though a meteor, say, were headed toward the northern hemisphere, and Americans and Russians shared a common interest in diverting it. This false perception of the problem derives logically from defining the problem in material terms—one of weaponry. But the U.S. and the USSR do not share a *common* enemy (technology), they are *mutual* enemies on ideological grounds. Thus Hehir and the bishops have completely misstated the problem in a way that is congenial to the Soviet Union. Hehir's misreading of the likely Soviet response to the Letter showed up irrefutably when the Soviet news agency Tass praised it.

At question time Bill Gavin, the author of a recent booklet on St. Athanasius put out by the National Committee of Catholic Laymen, came to the microphone. Pointing out that Hehir was the chief adviser to the bishops, and that Hehir himself had conceded that the Letter raised political questions, he thought it would be worth knowing "a little bit more about your political leanings. Could you tell us what presidential candidate you voted for in 1972?"

Oh, the Hive was in a buzz.

"Booooooooo-o-o-o," said the congregation in St. Peter's.

"Cheap shot," someone beside me said. Could this be McCarthyism?

Father Hehir gave it a little thought, but decided not to tell us how he had voted: ambiguity reigned.

"What Catholics in the United States need now," Gavin had written in his pamphlet, "in the bitter and divisive debate within the church over the morality of the deterrence theory of nuclear arms and the proper way to help the needy, is the wisdom, the common sense, the sensitivity and the leadership of an Athanasius. What they have, unfortunately, is a handful of church bureaucrats and members of the hierarchy who resemble the ecclesiastical court politicians of the court of Constantius more than they do the fourth century Bishop of Alexandria."

The bishops today may not realize how true this is because they stand opposed to the Court of Reagan and so see themselves as opposed to, not aligned with, the powers that be. Perhaps they need to be told that the new court, the only major power in the world today that commands a measure of deference and obedience from rival centers of power, is at the "Third Rome"—Moscow. This is the court with which the bishops today are in dutiful if unconscious alignment. □

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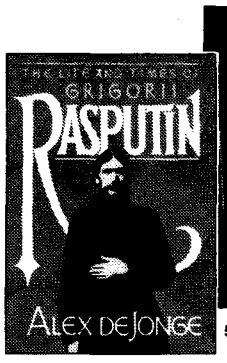

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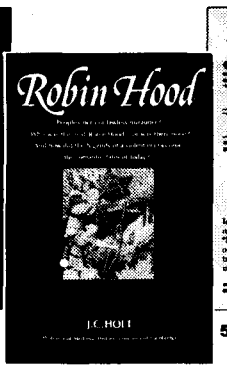

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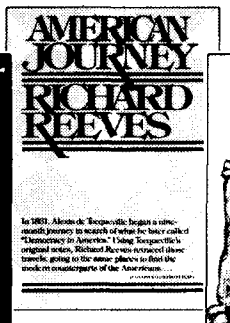

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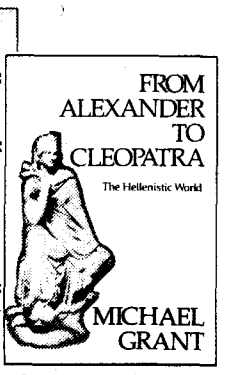

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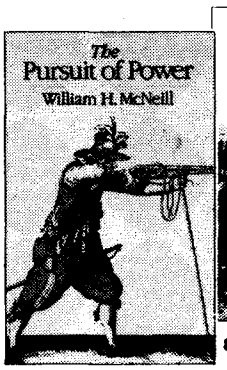

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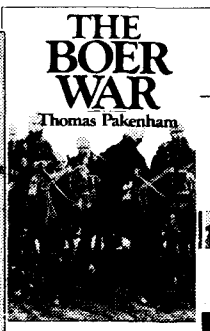

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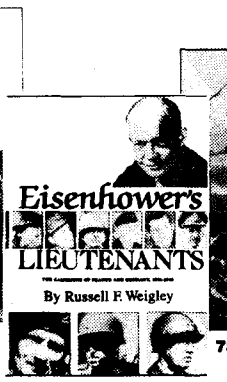

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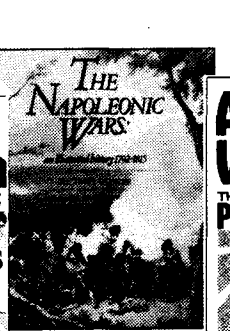

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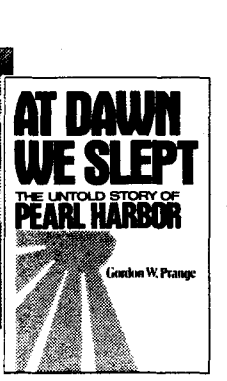

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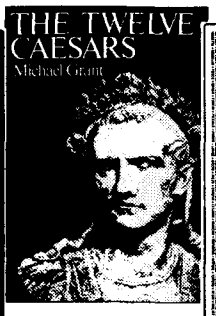

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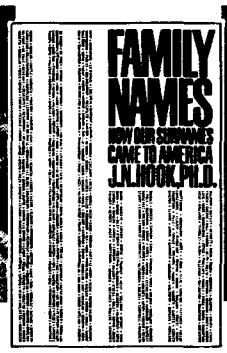

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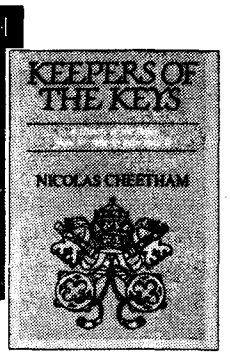

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Walter Berns

HOW TO TALK TO THE RUSSIANS

Call them Fascists.

The following speech was delivered at the 39th session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva earlier this year. It concerns Agenda Item 22—"Measures to be taken against all totalitarian or other ideologies and practices including Nazi, Fascist, and neo-Fascist, based on racial or ethnic exclusiveness or intolerance, hatred, terror, systematic denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms, or which have such consequences"—a resolution introduced by perennial advocates of human rights Afghanistan, Bulgaria, the Byelorussian SSR, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Poland, the Ukrainian SSR, and Vietnam.

• • •

Mr. Chairman, it was useful to hear the distinguished representative of Canada remind us of the title of this agenda item. That title is, "Measures to be Taken Against All Totalitarian or Other Ideologies"—that is, Mr. Chairman, ideologies in addition to Nazi, Fascist, and neo-Fascist ideologies—all ideologies that have the consequence of systematically denying human rights and fundamental freedoms. In their interventions this morning, the distinguished representatives of Bulgaria, the Soviet Union, and Poland concentrated on Fascism and Nazism, and completely overlooked the first and longest-lived totalitarian ideology, namely, Communism. Contrary to what was said this morning Hitler was not the first totalitarian to seize power; Stalin preceded him by a few years. And when it comes to denying human rights, only a judge with the wisdom of Solomon could referee a contest between Hitler and Stalin—although everyone (at least everyone my age) remembers that both Hitler and Stalin killed millions of their own people. Whatever the distinguished representative of the Ukrainian SSR may remember (or forget), his forebears in the Ukraine remember this. That's why, in 1941, they welcomed the German Army with open arms. They thought Hitler was the lesser of the two evils. And who is to say they were wrong? As I suggested, only a Solomon could judge between Hitler and Stalin. Neither one of them believed that human beings have human rights.

In this respect, Stalin was only following Karl Marx. I do not mean that Marx was a gangster or murderer—far from it—I mean that Marx was contemptuous of the very idea of human rights. He always referred to them as the "so-called human rights" or the "so-called rights of man." He said this especially in his essay "On the Jewish Question," which is why anti-Semitism, which used to be a phenomenon of the Right, is now a phenomenon of the Marxist or Communist Left. One should not, then, be surprised when Marxist or Communist regimes treat their people as Hitler treated his. And it is no accident, as the Communists would say, that Hitler admired Stalin; Stalin was a man of iron will, a man who did not hesitate to act (so to speak), a man who did not allow human rights to stand in his way when, in his judgment, things had to be done—even if they were terrible things. They had a lot in common, Hitler and Stalin, and the political systems they established had a lot in common—with this difference: Stalin's system survived World War II.

I was reminded of the similarities between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union as I listened this morning to the distinguished representative of the USSR. He obviously learned something from Hitler's propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels. He learned that if you repeat an untruth often enough, passionately enough, and loud enough, it might someday be accepted as the truth. That untruth, which he would have this commission accept as the truth, is that my country, if not yet a Fascist country, is moving in that direction; that it is "soft" on Fascism in the way that Senator Joseph McCarthy used to say it was "soft" on Communism, that it goes out of its way to protect Fascists: the John Birch Society, for example, or the Ku Klux Klan, the various young Fascists, and the various old Nazis. In this connection, he mentioned the trial in Greensboro, North Carolina, where members of the Ku Klux Klan were put on trial for murder and other crimes but were

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acquitted. He also mentioned the street riots in Washington last fall; and he mentioned the difficulties encountered by the special investigating office in the U.S. Department of Justice which is now attempting to have Nazis deported; these are Nazis who, under false names, have been living in the United States since the end of World War II.

Mr. Chairman, these are familiar charges; the USSR has made them before, here and in the General Assembly. It is not worth our time to reply to them in detail or at length. Quite obviously, the distinguished representative of the USSR has no experience with a legal system that guarantees everyone—Fascist, Communist, or anyone else—a fair trial before a jury of one's peers. Under such a system, even Fascists and Communists are sometimes found not guilty, because even Fascists and Communists are entitled to a fair trial. One might regret this in some cases, but we in the United States believe in due process of law, even if nasty persons are sometimes acquitted. And by due process of law, we mean a public trial, before a jury of one's peers, with the assistance of an independent and vigorous legal counsel. And a trial in which the government is required to prove the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

In the same way, the distinguished representative of the USSR obviously has no experience with a legal system that guarantees the human rights of freedom of speech and assembly, even assembly that takes the form of marches and demonstrations in the streets and sometimes leads to riots. Thus, he cannot understand how the police are charged with the responsibility of protecting the demonstrators, even if this means protecting Fascist demonstrators. So long as they are peaceful, they have a right to march, and the police have the duty of protecting them. The distinguished representative of the USSR cannot understand this sort of legal system. It is foreign to him. It doesn't happen in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union has a different system; here's an example of what I mean.

A few years ago, a handful of men in Lithuania tried to hijack an airplane, intending to fly it to Israel; they failed and were arrested. In due course there appeared in a Soviet legal journal a full account of their trial: the charges, the speeches of the prosecution, the speeches of the defense attorney, the verdict (guilty, of course), and the sentence. In short, here was a full account of what had taken place in that trial. The only thing wrong with this account duly published in the legal journal was that the trial had not yet taken place. It had been postponed, and someone had failed to inform the editor of the legal journal that it was going to be postponed; either that or the editor forgot to cancel the story. I've often wondered what happened to that editor; perhaps the distinguished representative of the USSR can enlighten us. At any rate, the experience of the Soviet representative is obviously limited to the Soviet legal system and excludes the American system where defendants are *first* tried and *then* sentenced, and sometimes tried and acquitted.

Mr. Chairman, a word now about the Nazis whom the United States is now trying to deport. As the distinguished representative of the USSR knows very well, this too requires a legal trial in the United States, and the government does not always win in those trials. Still—and again, the distinguished representative of the USSR knows this—the government of the United States has established a special office within the Department of Justice, an office that is assiduously investigating these cases, and, when it has enough evidence, it goes to court and tries to persuade a jury that these Nazis should be deported because they had entered the United States under false pretenses. The government does not always win; but it sometimes wins. And a Nazi is sometimes deported. Another Nazi, knowing that the government had very good evidence against him, voluntarily left the country. But, Mr. Chairman, no one familiar with a legal system that guarantees a fair trial before a jury chosen from among the people should be surprised when a jury votes against the government. These things happen in the United States, Mr. Chairman—I mean, these verdicts in favor of a defendant. It may be regrettable, but that is the price we pay for due process of law.

These things happen in the United States, Mr. Chairman—I mean, these verdicts in favor of a defendant.

Mr. Chairman, I want to acknowledge the assistance given my government by the Soviet Union in the collection of evidence against these former Nazis. The Soviet Union has been cooperative—fully cooperative, marvelously cooperative. I know this because a former student of mine, now working in the special office of the Department of Justice, has at least twice been to the Soviet Union for the purpose of examining Soviet records of Nazi war crimes, and he assures me that the Soviet officials have gone out of their way to be cooperative.

We only wish the Soviet Union had been more cooperative with the French and British in 1939. That is to say, we wish that the Soviets had opposed Nazi Germany then as vigorously as they did when they themselves were invaded. Instead, in the summer of 1939 they signed a nonaggression treaty with Nazi Germany. I'm referring, of course, to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Perhaps I should explain this to the distinguished representative of Poland where, apparently, the school textbooks no longer refer to it. Molotov was the Soviet foreign secretary and Ribbentrop was the foreign secretary of Nazi Germany, and, as the result of that agreement, the Nazis invaded Poland from the West (thereby beginning World War II) and the Soviets invaded Poland from the East, and there was no Poland left for the Polish people. I also feel obliged to remind the distinguished representative of the German Democratic Republic of some historical facts. He complained that Hitler owed his successes to the failure of anyone or any country to resist him. That is too simple an explanation. It fails to take account of the assistance given Hitler by the Soviet Union. By entering into the non-

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aggression pact, the Soviet Union assured Hitler that he would not have to fight on two fronts, east as well as west.

How different would be our world today if Stalin had followed the example of, say, Winston Churchill! How many lives would have been saved if, instead of cooperating with Hitler, instead of invading gallant Finland, the Soviet Union had cooperated with France, Britain, and Poland. Among other blessings, Poland might have been Poland today.

Mr. Chairman, the system that produced Hitler is dead. We can all be thankful for that. But the system and ideology that produced Stalin is not dead; it has its representatives in this very room. This commission would be well-advised if it were to concern itself with this lively form of totalitarianism. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. □

Chester E. Finn, Jr.

THE POLICY WIMP COMES OF AGE

He means no harm.

Why, inquired the curmudgeonly columnist over an elegant dinner, are so many "wimps" emerging from American high schools and colleges? Cultural decay, economic decline, political ennui, and social boredom will all deepen, he opined, if the younger generation continues to be colonized by diffident, inarticulate, noncommittal individuals whose noblest characteristic is their inoffensiveness.*

It set me to thinking. If wimpishness is on the increase among the products of our schools and colleges, could this have anything to do with the people who staff, run, and make policy for those institutions? Could this formulation help me, at least heuristically, to understand why it is that I have found much of the education profession to be so squooshy, bland, and saccharin as often to be downright annoying?

This turns out to be a useful insight, provided one distinguishes between wimpish people and wimpish ideas. My profession may not harbor a significantly greater proportion of individual wimps than most other fields of endeavor—more than Marine Corps drill instructors and disk jockeys, I suppose, but not more than accountants, morgue attendants, or keypunch operators—yet its mainstream ideology, its underlying beliefs, and its overriding objectives are indisputably on the wimpish side. It is a profession heavily populated by what I now think of as policy wimps.

*My slang dictionary defines "wimp" as a "weak, ineffectual, or insipid person." My unwimpish research assistant adds that "'wimp' is usually applied to males, not females." But I forgive her. A wimp can also be a "Valley Girl" without the teeth or the tan.

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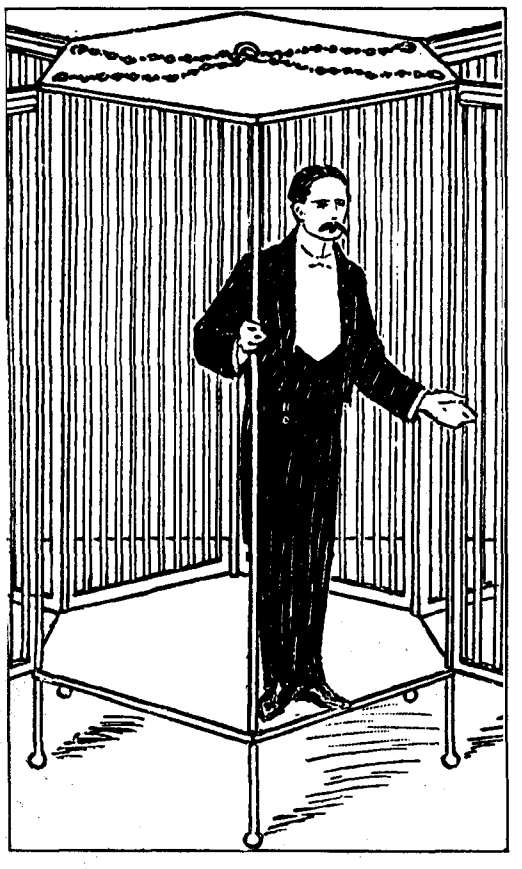
The policy wimp favors goodness and dislikes evil. He stands for decency, generosity, compassion, patience, understanding, tolerance, equality, and happiness. He opposes meanness, invidiousness, distinctions, envy, failure, pressure, discrimination, and unhappiness. But he does not oppose them with much vigor, certainly not to the point of discommoding anyone who may be evil, for that would not be nice, and the policy wimp seeks above all to be nice, to support things that are nice, and to be accommodating. With all the limited fervor at his command, he yearns to accommodate everyone.

This leads to policies that are generous in spirit and accommodating in execution, that seek to make life agreeable for as many people as possible. The ideal policy is one that nobody finds objectionable, awkward, or unpleasant. Hence the first question the policy wimp asks about a proposal is who might suffer or be made unhappy as a result of it, particularly in the short run, the time frame he instinctively adopts. If a proposed policy or program makes everyone smile, so much the better. But the important point is that no one find it objectionable, else the proposal is instantly suspect.



Policy wimpishness in the education profession has become more visible of late, because of the drive by governors, legislatures, citizens groups, employers, and various task forces to raise educational standards. In the short run, higher standards predictably serve to identify more people and institutions that do not meet them. If high school graduation requirements are increased, the number of people who do not graduate from high school will increase. If the "cut-off" score on college entrance tests is boosted, fewer people will be able to enter. If new teachers are held to a higher intellectual standard, a smaller proportion of those who might wish to join the profession will be able to.

All such measures are apt to produce more short-run discontent than the lower (or nonexistent) standards that they replace. To the policy wimp, this is more telling than the potential long-term benefit to the society that may result from the loftier norms. The policy wimp is not satisfied with a utilitarian calculus that estimates the greatest good for the greatest number. Rather, he employs an index of social hedonism that gauges alternatives according to the immediate pleasure and pain they are likely to yield, and he employs it with considerable rigor. Any predictable pain at all is enough to invalidate a proposal.

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The policy wimp even shies away from language that bites. He dotes on such words as "appropriate" and "relevant" and phrases such as "special needs," assiduously avoiding all terms that might alarm, upset, or give offense. He would never dream of describing a child as "retarded," a school as "inferior," a sub-population as "illiterate," or a government program as intended to pump money into lackluster colleges that cannot possibly attract enough students or resources to make it on their own but are beloved of some deserving or powerful group.

The denatured language of wimpish education policy eventually leads those using it to forget what is really meant, or never to understand it in the first place. Words can do that to you. As George Orwell put it, "the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts." Wimpish words and foolish thoughts can even redefine the essence of the goal or problem to which a policy is addressed. Orwell wrote of "political language [that] has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness." Education policy is commonly written, and debated, in such language. A good example is bilingual education. The crucial problem for schools with immigrant children is how best to teach English—fast—to those youngsters whose parents do not speak it. But policy wimps cannot bring themselves to say that, for fear the children will get their feelings hurt or (more likely) the spokesmen for sundry ethnic and linguistic minorities will object. So we drift into variations on the theme of "multi-cultural" education and the problem we set out to solve gets replaced by quite a different one.

Policy wimps are vulnerable to individuals and groups who are prepared to state strong interests and to voice objections. They are easily manipulated by anyone who really knows what he wants, and are positively undone by anyone wily enough to protest a policy on grounds that it would harm, inconvenience, or upset himself, his community, or a group to which he belongs.

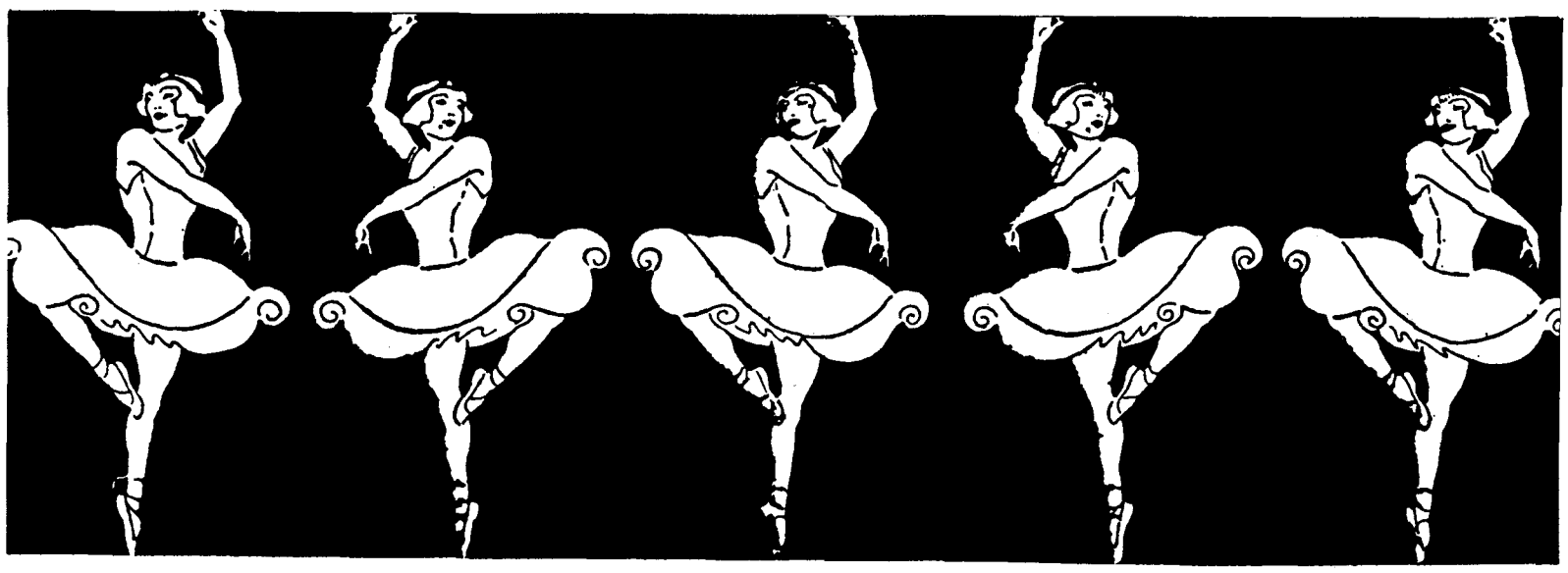
Policy wimps are reluctant to impose their own ideas. They do not like to prescribe what others should learn or be able to do, what their values ought to be, or even how they ought to behave. Now, of course, writing and filling such prescriptions for children are the fundamental responsibilities that society has assigned to schools. Shirking them is tantamount to rejecting the ineluctable obligation of adult educators to mold the young students given to their charge. And it goes far to explain why so many parents, taxpayers, and voters are dismayed with the current condition of American education, and why governors, legislators, and citizens groups are now finally shouldering the burden of making such decisions.

The policy wimp favors goodness and dislikes evil. He stands for decency, generosity, compassion, patience, understanding, tolerance . . .

But even as they decline to specify cognitive, ethical, and behavioral norms for children in schools, policy wimps also resist setting any limits for schooling. No matter how exotic or unrealistic the assignment, so long as someone feels strongly that schools should undertake it, the policy wimp does not demur. Avoiding confrontation at all costs, he amiably allows the formal education system to be charged with equalizing economic inequalities, healing emotional and psychological wounds, legitimating odd life-styles, fitting youngsters with job skills, and supplying any sort of instruction that someone thinks worthwhile, from energy conservation to human reproduction to the glories of the United Nations and the marvels of the metric system. Though unwilling to prescribe values, the policy wimp is only too willing to create circumstances in which children are encouraged to "clarify" their own. Reluctant to throw chronically disruptive youngsters out of school, the policy wimp assents to guards in the corridors. Wary of discarding silly books from the curriculum and library shelves and replacing them with literature, the policy wimp all but invites the school board to host angry confrontations between censorious citizen groups of every ideological stripe.

The policy wimp is often conservative, not in his politics but in his devotion to established patterns, habits, and mindsets. If teachers have always been paid according to seniority and graduate credit hours, the policy wimp is shaken by the suggestion that meritorious performance might be a better basis for salary determinations, and his anxiety is transformed into deep discomfort by the revelation that some constituency that he would like to accommodate—union leaders, for example, teachers-college deans, or civil-rights groups—finds the proposed change objectionable. If the town or state is accustomed to promoting every child from fourth to fifth grade on the basis of "seat time," the policy wimp is discomfited by any proposal to make intellectual attainment a condition for future promotions, and discomfiture turns to anguish in the presence of parents whose children actually have to repeat fourth grade. If the state university has traditionally stressed the "affective domain" in its curriculum for future teachers, and if the faculty likes it that way, the policy wimp is reluctant to create a stir by insisting on greater attention to cognitive learning.

The policy wimp does not necessarily oppose change. Indeed, steadfast devotion to the idea of "innovation" is apt to be part of his intellectual make-up. What he resists is unhappiness, particularly when it can be attributed to policy changes to which he may be party, and especially when the unhappiness is felt—and voiced—by individuals or constituencies whose happiness is important to his own. He may suspect that the change would be good for those who assert the contrary, but he does not have it in him to look them in the eyes and say so. This timidity parallels his



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diffidence with respect to prescribing content, standards, and behavior for students. If he cannot bring himself to stipulate that every high school pupil must study chemistry or learn a foreign language (or salute the flag, or shave, or treat fellow students with respect), it is certainly unrealistic to expect the policy wimp to take on organized groups of adults with loud voices, media access, and political clout.

Avoidance of confrontation is part of the policy wimp's public make-up. That does not mean all soft-spoken, mild-mannered, outwardly easy-going people espouse wimpish policies, any more than all vigorous orators and hearty back-slappers are given to education policies with teeth. Wimpishness is not, in its essence, a behavioral trait. It is intellectual and ideological.

In education policy, wimpishness has several origins. It derives partly from pedocentrism—the notion that the school ought to be tailored to the needs of the individual child, rather than the child obliged to adjust to the school—a notion that has dominated American educational thought for most of this century. Partly from the cultural and social relativism dwelling in the liberal elites that have long played leading roles in education policy formation. Partly from the "do-your-own-thing" libertarianism imbibed on university campuses in the sixties and seventies. Partly from the exquisite group sensitivities of the "new politics." Partly from revulsion at anything that anyone could think of as discrimination. Partly, no doubt, from heartfelt love for one's fellow men. And partly, I believe, from plain old-fashioned confusion about what is right and what is wrong and who is to say.

Whatever its origins, wimpishness involves the lack of resolute convictions save at the vaguest and most general level, a dearth of clearly perceived standards and norms, and an unwillingness (or inability) to make choices about which there is no consensus or decisions that are other than the lowest common denominator. Perversely, this leads to mistrust of democratic political processes, for true wimpishness does not permit one to take comfort from decisions that aggrieve any minority, however small or selfish.

The policy wimp may be feckless but he is not evil. He is accommodating. He is outwardly tolerant. He is generally kindly. He is indisputably well-meaning. He may not be boring—many policy wimps are good company—and in private he may even be an opinionated opera critic, a daring rock climber, or a tyrannical Little League coach. But his "policy persona," which is the aspect of him that influences what goes on in schools and colleges, can be described in terms akin to those a restaurant reviewer recently used to evoke a bowl of soup she had consumed: "vague and sweet and starchy."

If one believes that education should have tang and savor, that schooling should be flavorful as well as nutritious, and that public policies shaping it should hew to standards and expectations at least as demanding as those we apply to eating places, then wimpishness will not suffice. It is not, in itself, bad. Rather, it suffers from a surfeit of good intentions. But it is vulnerable to manipulation by those whose intentions are not good. It does violence to the language. It saps the vitality of the culture. And it fosters the formation of more and more young Americans who replicate in their personal style and intellectual orientation the characteristics of the policies that guide their education. My dinner companion called them wimps. □

Herb Greer

MODERN ARABIAN NIGHTS

Israel, the CIA, and two new thrillers from Richard Grenier and John Le Carré.

There was once a time when a certain sort of bright and decent person refused on principle to believe in God, because God was an excuse for oppression. In our less palmy days this type is apt to deny on principle that there is any such thing as an enemy, especially on the international scene. This person's heart *knows* that no one wants to harm us, or oppose us except in the way of friendly competition; if enemies do exist, they are the paranoid elements of our own government and their conspiratorial backers, employees, and client states. These sinister forces talk about nuclear weapons in an aggressive way and affright big nations like Russia and China; they exploit, corrupt, starve, and generally oppress smaller countries whose poor people only want to be left alone so they can make a better life for themselves (with lots of no-strings aid from the West). If it were not for *our* primary bad guys there would be no Cold War, no subversion, no spies, terrorists, hostage-taking, revolutions, anti-American propaganda, or foreigners who hate us. Only friendly competition. The world would be organized by chummy nations who could settle down and live happily ever after, secure in the knowledge that we are all the same, really—brothers and sisters under the skin, no less.

The broad axiom which arises from all this is that if anything ugly happens anywhere in the world and involves us or our interests (say the bombing of our Beirut Embassy), it is necessarily our fault, because we employ and/or support the primary bad guys. The closer to the United States the trouble comes, the more culpable we are. Any proof to the contrary is forged by the bad guys, so forget all that. This American corner on the ultimate causes of political evil is a species of fancy which never seems to go away for long. Early in the century Bernard Shaw and his coterie were putting it about that the real cause of wars was the greed of armaments manufacturers. Not long before that, a fertile imagination had given birth to the Elders of Zion, a kind of malignant, invisible, world-sized organizational squid, whose tentacles were sapping the Christian moral fiber and precious bodily fluids so that the Jews could take over.

Now the Americans, who (as everybody knows) have everything these days,

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also possess a malignant world-sized organizational squid (not invisible, but in the media age we must not expect too much). The name of this atrocious Yankee beast is—ah, you guessed it—the CIA. Yes, Virginia, there is a CIA, but I am not talking about that. I mean *The CIA,* that most wonderful of all things to all decent and fearful persons. Since this scaly monster first reared its head in the waters of the Bay of Pigs, we have learned that it is hopelessly clumsy, incompetent, disorganized, blind, stupid, inefficient, and about to take over the country. We know too that it is omnipresent and omnipotent in the Third World, where it ruthlessly claws down the hopes of revolutionary freedom fighters, smothers little nations, and crushes the poor and the liberators—except in Cuba, and Vietnam, and Africa, and Central America, and a few other places where it is naturally trying hard, but not doing very well. According to a certain (decent) strain of public opinion, it is a mirror image of the KGB in any case, and they are all bastards together, chopping up each other in a silly game that is not worth the candle. The British in particular are prone to this view, but it is not unknown inside the continental United States.

Fictional treatment of *The CIA,* when it aspires to quality, tends toward the pi and the sour, wallowing in drugstore irony and fabricated disillusion. It was inevitable that a good writer was going to come along and put a match to this convention. In *The Marrakesh One-Two** Richard Grenier has written a bloody, chaotic, acute, and enormously funny send-up of the spy genre, set in some of those places where the CIA is trying but not doing too well—in this case the Maghreb and part of the Middle East. The book jacket promises blood lusts, assassinations, *coups d'état,* and hijacking "depicted with murderous realism." Well, yes and no. The "realism" is not murderous but deft, with the delicate flair of a brilliant stand-up comic. Grenier's style is flexible, ranging from the Wrigley's Spearmint-cum-Tom Wolfe manner—

> I could hear the muezzin calling the faithful to prayer but I didn't hear nobody pray, man. No, I didn't. And it's a pretty miserable call, too, let me tell you. GWAWAWAWAWAWAWAWK. FNUHUHUHUHUHUHUHUHUH—glottal stop. On and on, five times a day. And I didn't *see* nobody pray, either. Never, never, never. Not once.

—to a clear straight prose which is used to describe most of the violent action.

The narrator-protagonist, who bears the unlikely name of Burt Nelson, is unusual as fictional spies go, almost as bemused as Candide, but lacking his ironclad innocence. Instead he deploys a lethally humorous common sense, even in highly intimate situations:

> "I just love holding it," she breathed fervently. "It belongs to me, I know it." Which was overstatement, surely. I mean what the hell. It belonged to me.

Nelson is not your fundamentally moral anti-establishment figure à la Harry Palmer, forced into the business against his will. He is a volunteer son of a bitch for his country, good at his job of lower-echelon CIA gofer; endowed with blond hair, candid blue eyes, and a charming open manner, he is proud to be a first-class liar. His flair for languages helps as he skitters around the wilder fringes of Arab politics, bribing a little here (not always successfully), blackmailing a little there, even passing on weapons for the hijacking of an airliner. A lot of this is either wasted effort or makes no apparent sense, but Nelson is rich in negative capability and carries on in his cheerful competent way. As he says more than once, the big picture is not his business.

His cover, not very deep, is the role of screenwriter on a cinematic biography of Mohammed, which has its own problems. For one, the Prophet, his family, and all his close colleagues are too sacred to be shown on the screen; there are ways around this, but the iconophobic Arabs who are backing the film keep withdrawing their money. A consequent search for financial oases keeps the film unit on the move from Morocco to Libya to Cairo, the Gulf States, and on to pre-Khomeini Teheran. The rich Iranians say *shash* ("I crush my eyeballs") to flatter the Americans, but do not give them any money. Nelson is last seen back on duty, chatting up an expensive American whore who has been bedding the Shah. The idea is to put the King of Kings under the CIA's thumb by faking dirty pictures of him with the whore.

There is plenty of *grand guignol* as promised: slaughter with guns and a knife and bare hands; one very bloody attempted coup against the King of Morocco and a terrorist kidnapping of the hero; a riot in Libya, and minor cloak and dagger work including an interview with a distinctly surrealistic ayatollah. Running in tandem with the carnage and spookery is a ludicrous and hilarious account of how Nelson and his Hollywood-Lebanese producer fail to finish the Mohammed bio-pic. The two storylines converge over Iraq in an insane multiple hijacking, a climactic and virtuoso mingling of horror and low farce.

Grenier exploits the satirical possibilities of this farrago with consummate skill. Film-makers who are greedy but have a pretentious mission (in this case promoting "understanding" between Islam and the West) come off very badly; so does a Social Register avatar of Gloria Steinem whom Nelson meets twice—once in a bizarre interview during his kidnapping and again at an airport in the Persian Gulf:

> "Listen, lady," I said.
>
> "Nancy."
>
> "Listen, lady. Do you know I almost got whacked out in Marrakesh? Do you know that you were the one that came and announced my death sentence?"
>
> "But you were the class enemy," she said imploringly. "You were the capitalist-imperialist-warmongering Imperial Penis!"
>
> "Holy shit," I said numbly.
>
> "You were the cancer of history. You were preventing the improvement of human nature. You had to be removed so that mankind could advance."

In *The Marrakesh One-Two* Richard Grenier has written a bloody, chaotic, acute, and enormously funny send-up of the spy genre.

Shortly thereafter Nelson and the feminist advance to the back seat of a Rolls Royce, where the capitalist-imperialist et cetera has its revenge, in one of the droll sexual encounters scattered through the book.

There is also a deal of information about Islam, both Sunni and Shia, presented as Nelson's background for the Mohammed film. Much of this is put humorously, as it were like Voltaire in a xenophobic mood, not entirely fair to Islam. (It is a little like an essay on Christianity which dwells on the Homo-Homoiousian dispute, *auto-da-fe* and the Inquisition, Matthew Hopkins, the Children's Crusade, Galileo, snake fondlers in the Ozarks, the older generation of New Mexico Penitentes, and the Rev. Jim Jones, with quotes from the *Malleus Maleficarum* thrown in for atmosphere.) I suspect it has a serious point, which is that there is no use expecting Islam to be fair to us. Through all the wise-cracking and the jokes and the cock-eyed farcical behavior there runs a cold insistence that there are foreign bodies out there who are not like us and do not wish us well. These are not the papier-mache villains, freelance madmen, or red counteragents of "normal" spy-fiction, but inhabitants of a real, very large culture which operates on other wavelengths than ours, believing fanatically in things we do not believe in, and profoundly alien in ways which those who have not seen them simply cannot grasp. I do not want to lean too heavily on this, because *The Marrakesh One-Two* is first of all wonderful entertainment; but it is also a useful corrective to the brothers-and-sisters-under-the-skin superstition. Now and then we do need reminding that the brotherhood

*Houghton Mifflin, $14.95.

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of man is a taxonomical abstraction, one rather weak faith among many stronger ones; that these stronger ones make for differences between peoples which run far deeper than the epidermis, and are not about to be dissolved by taxonomy, or by sentimental *Schwärmerei,* or by clumsy good intentions.

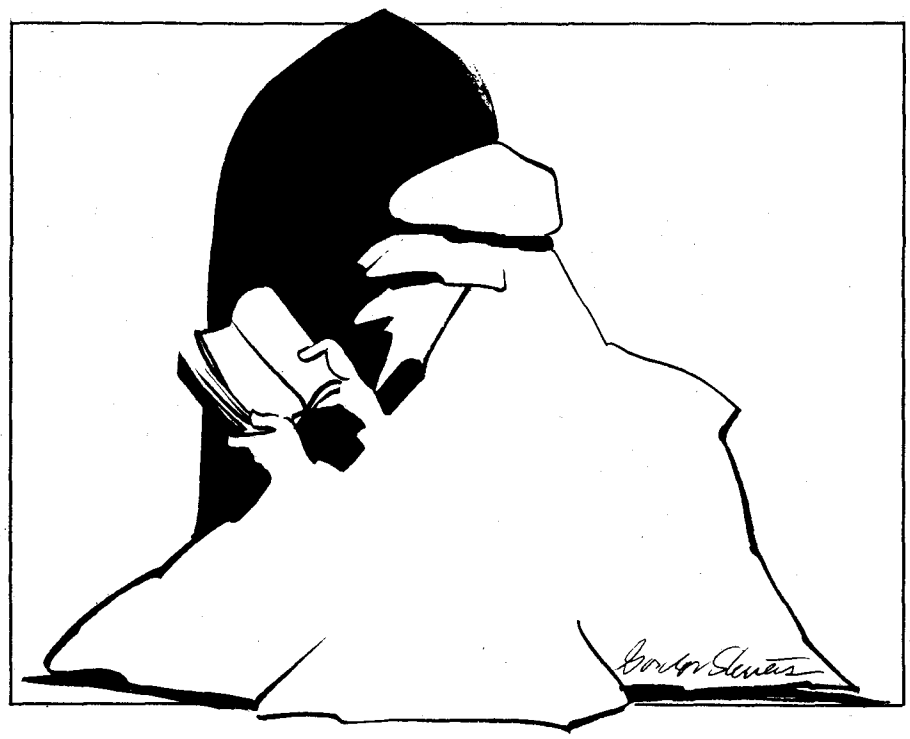
Looking through the eyes of a stubbornly and self-consciously American narrator, Grenier is still able to give the sense that he sees what *is there* in this exotic world. Whether he sees it all or not is beside the point; what he does see feels right, and one believes that he is more than a tourist or a writer gathering "material." This quality has much to do with the portrayal of human beings in the story, and it is precisely what gives life to the British spy novels of David Cornwell, a.k.a. John Le Carré. Cornwell's new novel, *The Little Drummer Girl,*† makes do without all that, moving away from his solidly British home ground and into the swamp of the Arab-Israeli conflict—specifically into the area of terror and counter-terror.

Reading *The Little Drummer Girl* is something like looking into a zoetrope. For those who have forgotten or never seen this contraption, I will explain: it resembles a wide deep coffee-can, pierced all round with vertical slits and mounted on a turning column. A strip of paper with figures printed in sequence is mounted on the inside; this is illuminated and the can is spun, like a top. Peering through the slits, one sees the figures on the paper leaping, dancing, turning somersaults, and performing other amusing gyrations.

The gyrations inside Le Carré's tin can are very strange indeed, but not very amusing. His strip of paper or plot is a hammered papyrus of *Trilby* and the TV standby about the undercover cop who penetrates organized crime to finger the Godfather, just escaping with his life. The book's Godfather is one Khalil, a Palestinian terrorist chief who signs his bombs by twisting the excess wire inside them into a doll. After he kills a number of their people including a child, the Israelis want him dead. To this end Le Carré asks the reader to believe that a member of their intelligence organization—one of the most professional in the world—"assembles his own private army"; in the Greek Islands this crew kidnaps a vacationing English actress (who is mediocre at her job, fiercely pro-Arab, neither bright nor very stable, and extremely radical chic); against her admittedly feeble will they transform her into an agent so dedicated, so devious, and so plausible that she is able to penetrate a terrorist network of ferocious complexity, leading an Israeli hit squad straight to Khalil, who is promptly riddled with bullets. This bloody moment upsets the actress badly, but she is taken back to Britain, where she never breathes a word to the media, takes up acting again, and one night sees her Israeli control officer in the audience. The two of them happen to be in love, and so they go off together, into the night.

A brief synopsis is never very fair to any work. *King Lear* or *Hamlet* can be made to seem preposterous in this way. What rescues them from absurdity is the skill of the author in suspending disbelief, which is mostly a function of his sympathy for the environment and characters in his story. Here I find myself in a slightly embarrassing position, since I found this work utterly lacking in sympathy, humor, or even simple psychological plausibility. But—if newsmagazines, television, and the reviews quoted in a full-page advertisement in the *Times* of London are any criteria—the critics of America have been stunned, enchanted, and more or less swept off their feet by this book. Even the *Wall Street Journal* insisted: this is "one of the finest, most troubling books of this master story-teller." I agree with the second adjective. This book troubles me because that response to it seems an illustration of Lincoln's political saw that you can fool some of the people all of the time—at least in the United States. In my minority opinion it is simplistic, cheaply melodramatic, bathetic, incredibly silly, and, worst of all, manipulative, shallow, and propagandistic on the very issues it is supposed to explore impartially and in depth.

†Alfred A. Knopf, $15.95.



Le Carré seems to think that a reader who has followed him as far as page 422 is prepared to believe anything.

First of all the book is mislabeled. It is not a novel but a tract in the form of an elaborate fiction. In a genuine novel the life of the characters takes precedence over what I call the nudge-wink factor. (This is the case with Grenier's book.) In a tract like *The Little Drummer Girl* the characters, plot, and everything else take second place to the propaganda. This may explain the flat and improbable quality of so much of the dialogue. There is, for instance, the first confrontation of Charlie the actress with her Israeli captors. The brilliant intelligence officer speaks:

"Charlie, what we seek to do, we wish to define ourselves, we wish to introduce ourselves, and though nobody here is given to apologizing overmuch, we also wish to say we're sorry. Some things have to be done. We did a couple of them and that's how it is. Sorry, greetings, and again welcome. Hi."

It will be remembered that this man is talking to a girl who has been kidnapped and is being held against her will.

"Charlie, primarily we are decent people . . . good people. In that sense, like good and decent people the world over, I guess you could reasonably call us non-sectarian, non-aligned and deeply concerned about the many wrong directions the world is taking. If I add that we are also Israeli citizens, I trust that you will not immediately foam at the mouth, vomit, or jump out of the window, unless of course it is your personal conviction that Israel should be swept into the sea, napalmed, or handed over gift-wrapped to one or another of the many fastidious Arab organizations committed to our elimination."

Sensing a secret shrinking in her, Kurtz lunged for it immediately. "*Is* that your conviction, Charlie?" he enquired, dropping his voice. "Perhaps it is. Why don't you just tell us how you feel about that? You want to get up right now? Go home? You have your air ticket, I believe. We'll give you money. Want to run for it?"

But Charlie, who has "chaos and momentary terror inside her," does not accept the offer. Why? "Because Israel was a confused abstraction to her, engaging both her protectiveness and her hostility." There is more confused abstraction in the book than cogent reality, which may account for Le Carré's sometimes bizarre ideas about Jews. (At one point he mentions an orthodox Jew whose ambition is to have his *daughter* go to Oxford and then join the firm.)

The method used to convert Charlie from pro-Arab actress to pro-Israeli agent is simply to bombard her with rhetoric. And what rhetoric!

"We are aiming to address the natural humanity in you, that is all. We are aiming at your good, caring, human heart. Your feelings. Your sense of right. We mean to ask nothing of you which conflicts in any wise with your strong and decent ethical concerns. Your *polemical* politics—the names you give to your beliefs—well, we would like to put them on a back burner. Your beliefs themselves—the more confused they are, the more irrational, the more *frustrated*—Charlie, we respect them totally. On this premise you will surely sit with us a little longer and hear us out."

Charlie swallows this transparent potpourri of lies, insults, and verbal fluff, obligingly goes along with the back-burner suggestion, and eventually agrees to track down a man so that these gabby Svengalis can kill him. The fictional premise is neat: being confused and never quite certain of herself, she will identify a little better with the terrorists and so convince them that she is really on their side. This works until she has passed a night of passion and conversation with the formidable Khalil. Having fallen in love with him, she is betrayed by a bugged radio she happens to be carrying, and confesses all. The deadly terrorist does not strike back or even defend himself when his killers burst in. Khalil, who (unlike the Israelis) always kills for love and respects his

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victims, merely strokes Charlie's cheek and forgives her just before he is shot down. Unfortunately there is no time for him to say, "Allah, forgive them, for they know not . . ."

There is nothing last-minute about this slant. The book opens with a bomb outrage in Bad Godesberg near Bonn. There are Jewish and non-Jewish victims, including one Israeli child. Le Carré makes the press exaggerate the number of casualties, ignore those who are non-Jewish, and "sanctify" the child. Having described all this in a sullen, rather sneering manner, he lets us know that the child was really an unpleasant, neurotic little brat. There is also a reminder that Israeli bombings kill "dozens of children at a time." The Israeli victims, quick and dead, are a contemptible lot, sunk in greed, ambition, and adulterous lust after *au pair* girls, besides being weak and stupid—your typical Jews, hardly worthy of survival.

Should this introductory passage leave the reader with any sense of ambiguity, the author clarifies his case as the book goes on. When the Israelis are not a wretched gaggle deserving of a gelignite lunch, they are cold, hard, implacable, ruthless, and extremely deadly—a species of quasi-Hitlerian *Übermenschen* who homilize a lot and play very dirty. The Israeli terrorist-chaser and his private army have ways of making you talk, which they use on their intended victim's brother—just before they sedate him and his girlfriend, put them into a car packed with explosives, and blow them to bits on a German autobahn. The explosion is managed so as not to disturb passing traffic, which shows what clever fiends these Yids—er, Jews—are. They also have a secret network reaching into every fissure and cranny of the Western and Middle Eastern worlds, from Hollywood and British show business to the German police, the media, Palestinian refugee camps, terrorist training bases, the holiday resorts of Greece, Hampstead—I mean, they are *everywhere.* I am sure no reference to the Elders of Zion is intended, but the resemblance is compelling.

The Palestinians, now, they are something else again. They have no *real* network worthy of the name—only a thin scattering of sympathizers in Europe, including liberal lawyers and civil-rights activists. They themselves are weak and desperate and soft-hearted, sweet-tempered even when making bombs, given to cute idiosyncratic touches like twisting detonator wire into a doll. In short, a warm, human, familial folk. They are "driven by faith," "full of life's fun," perhaps monsters in Israeli eyes, but really "kids" and "babies," "full of love and discreet." Not at all anti-Semitic, they are only anti-Zionist. When a refugee camp is bombed they suffer horribly, with plenty of women and children about the place. But—unlike the Israelis—they are modest about their dead, with none of that hysterical and exaggerated publicity. Even their German lady terrorist helper reads Erich Fromm and believes in *Sein, nicht haben.* (To be fair, she is a nut, whom nobody really likes, not even the warm-hearted Palestinians.)

One Israeli is made into the exception which proves the rule about ugly Zionist Jews. This is Joseph, Charlie's control officer and lover whom she calls "Jose." He has doubts about the carnage, he is a man of depth and sympathy and rich emotions and has scruples, and you wonder what he is doing on the Israeli side. When Charlie meets and sleeps with Khalil the Godfather Terrorist you find out. Except for a hand crippled by an Israeli bomb, Khalil is a mirror image of Joseph. This appears to be an attempt to establish some sort of *bona fide* for Le Carré's impartiality, but the rest of the book is so loaded that it comes off as one more piece of arbitrary rigging—*voulu,* to say the least.

The glum aseptic prose of the narrative does muffle some of the propaganda, so that its effect is a bit less stark than my description. Not much less, though. The aim is never in doubt: to grab the reader's lapels and ram home the argument that Israel is opposed only by kind-hearted, helpless refugees who kill for love. That they kill at all is the fault of Zionists who have stolen their land. The background and history of the conflict are dealt with by reference to atrocity stories which are commonplaces of Palestinian propaganda. The very fictional resolution of the plot underlines the criminal-Israeli thesis: the book's whole cast of anti-Israeli activists in Europe, civil-rights lawyers and all, are wiped out in a Corleone-style holocaust. This features a car-bombing in central London that "rates hardly a notice anywhere." Le Carré seems to think that a reader who has followed him as far as page 422 is prepared to believe anything.

It may surprise Americans to know that the author is not a newcomer to the genre of shallow, perverse polemic. In 1980, after Britain's SAS had rescued hostages from a terrorist siege of London's Iranian Embassy, Le Carré published a full-page article in the *Observer.* The SAS action, he moaned, had "awakened the sleeping psychopath in all of us"; the killing of the terrorists had helped to brutalize British society into a near-fascist state of mind. The attack should never have taken place, and Le Carré affected not to know why police negotiations had been stopped. (It was because the terrorists had begun killing hostages, but this was not mentioned in the article.) The question-begging, caviling, and specious psychology of that piece are closely paralleled in *The Little Drummer Girl,* beginning with the sentimental irony of the title and following through to the anti-Israeli arguments put into the mouths of Jews.

None of these arguments rises above the level of journalistic catch-phrases which have been mouthed at hundreds of press conferences. One smells the conversations with PLO "freedom fighters," notes taken while enjoying an excursion through the ruins of Beirut. There is no hint in this account of the profound enmities so well described and analyzed in Grenier's book. The thrust of Le Carré's story and characters is unmistakable: like our own paranoid conspirators, like those villainous armaments manufacturers who caused wars, it is the Israelis who are the primary bad guys in the Middle East. But for their aggressiveness and cruelty, neither Jews nor anyone else would have enemies out there—certainly not among the Palestinians, who are *human* and just want "their land" back. As with the hostage-murder in the London siege, both Arab exploitation of the Palestinians and the PLO covenant's aim of wiping Israel away are quietly smothered out of the discussion. What remains are the Ugly Israelis, lurking everywhere to destroy those who threaten them—and well aware that they themselves are the guilty parties. This is stressed by wheeling out "liberal" or left-wing Israelis who express dark doubts: unless Gaza and the West Bank are given up, Israel will lose its "soul." For scruples among diaspora Jews, Le Carré dips into his files for a dime-store aphorism of Arthur Koestler's, posing a dilemma for Israel: is the country to be a Jewish homeland, or an ugly little Spartan state?

The use of this parting cheap shot (which happens to express a false set of alternatives) highlights the fact that Le Carré is facing a dilemma of his own: is he going to follow his talent and write more good novels, or is he going to continue with the lucrative hack work of gathering "material" as he did in the Middle East, using it to cobble up fashionably polemic best-sellers? He has done very well out of both activities. We shall have to wait and see which one he prefers. □

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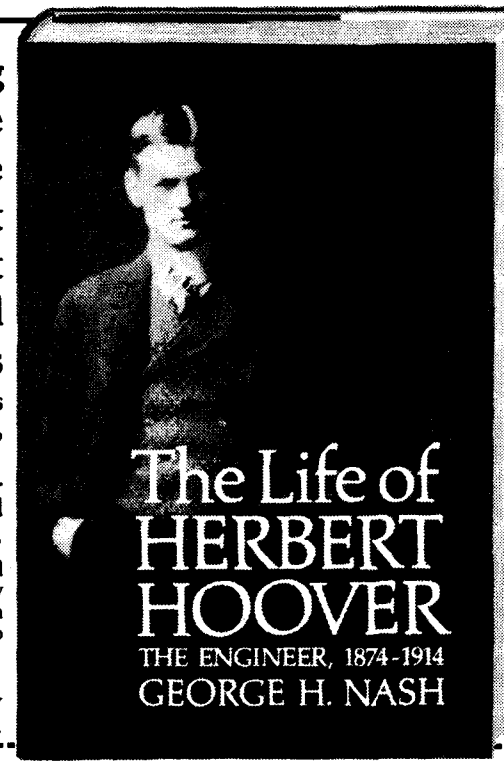

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David L. Wilkinson

PORN, CABLE TV, AND CENSORSHIP

Anything goes is not what the Founding Fathers had in mind.

In the last few months, some half-dozen state legislatures have considered measures to regulate the excessively sexual content of some cable TV programming. In one such state (Utah), a cable TV programming decency act became law after the Legislature one evening overrode a gubernatorial veto amidst bitter public controversy. The next morning found cable company lawyers on the courthouse steps, waiting for its doors to open so they could rekindle the controversy in the courts. Not surprisingly, public discourse on this subject—as filtered by local and national media—has been overwhelmingly weighted in favor of those opposing any form of regulation. One wonders how the Founding Fathers would react to this discourse if, indeed, they would consider it such. More likely than not they would point to the opposition—and more particularly to the TV programming which this opposition benefits—as proof positive that they were dead right in taking the skeptical view of man they did.

Anyone reading *The Federalist* papers today, for example, might well be struck by the way their authors matter-of-factly discuss the frailties of mankind. Madison's famous passage in Number 55 speaks candidly of "a degree of depravity in manhood which requires a certain degree of circumspection and distrust." To counterbalance this, Madison taught, certain "other qualities in human nature which justify a certain portion of esteem and confidence" were essential to the character of those making up the society to which the Constitution was to be carefully tailored. Absent a society possessing these qualities in some abundance, the Constitution he fathered would fail. These other qualities Madison and the others at Philadelphia understood full well to be the traditional "republican morality" or "civic virtue," by which they meant, among other things, self-restraint and piety.

In contrast to current political orthodoxy, which accepts the mechanics of democracy as a form of religious dogma for all peoples, our Founders prescribed republican self-government rather discriminately. For example, Jefferson and John Adams agreed in the 1780s that the French, as a people, were then too "depraved" to embark upon the perilous waters of self-government (a judgment which, in retrospect, only the most incurable romantic could question).

The notion that self-government would not work without citizens of good character, as quaint as it seems to our generation, was widely known among the political thinkers who contributed to the birth of modern democracies. This notion, indeed, was an essential part of the thinking of Rousseau, Madison, and such different Founders as the believer Samuel Adams and the skeptic Franklin. A corollary of this notion was that the law should attempt to promote and maintain that good character, if only by safeguarding the efforts of other institutions, particularly the church and family, to promote and maintain it. The Founders clearly recognized the need not only to attend to the mechanics of their new nation (the "new science of government," as they called it), but also, more importantly, to nurture its spirit—the "republican virtue" of its people. Although by the middle of the Eighteenth Century there was a larger percentage of "non-professing Christians" in the American colonies than in any state in Western Europe, men like Franklin, John Adams, and Jefferson were indifferent to religions, as the late Clinton Rossiter puts it, but not to religion.

Because today so many leaders in the media and the universities react violently to any suggestion of censorship of any form, it is difficult for us to grasp that not many decades ago in our society, censorship in the arts (as opposed to other kinds of censorship) was common and, in most circles, quite respectable. To be sure, many thoughtful defenders of First Amendment and academic-freedom principles concede that neither the polity nor the arts benefit from the explicit portrayal of copulation on a movie screen; and that such activity is entitled to no outpouring of constitutional protection. Thus Morris Ernest, who as a renowned civil libertarian lawyer, once had defended *Ulysses,* recoiled from "sodomy on the stage or masturbation in the public arena," insisting (contrary to prior declamations) that he always had stated he "would hate to live in a world with utter freedom." Further, many examples of universally approved censorship exist in the fabric of our law. Justice Holmes's hypothetical case of a man falsely shouting fire in a theater and thus causing a panic is only the most famous. The laws of libel, copyright, and securities regulation are others which come readily to mind. As in the case of those instances of well-established censorship, it is to the courts we must turn to cut through the obfuscation thrown up against any form of censorship in the arts.

In June 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court decided a landmark series of six cases on the subject of censoring obscenity. The most famous of these opinions, *Miller* v. *California,* formulated the technical (and highly complex) legal definition of obscenity ("hard-core pornography") which

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could be proscribed without offending First Amendment principles. One of the cases decided the same day as *Miller* was *Paris Adult Theatre I* v. *Slaton*. In many ways more important than *Miller*, *Slaton* articulates the Court's rationale for its rejection of the argument that obscene films are constitutionally immune from state regulation if they are exhibited for consenting adults only.

The Court in *Slaton* identified the legitimate state interests in "stemming the tide of commercialized obscenity" as "the interest of the public in the quality of life and the total community environment, the tone of commerce in the great city centers and, possibly, the public safety itself." Quoting from a 1942 case, the Court reaffirmed that obscene utterances "are no essential part of any exposition of ideas, and are of such slight social value as a step to truth that any benefit that may be derived from them is clearly outweighed by *the social interest in order and morality*" [emphasis mine].

In countering the hackneyed argument that no hard scientific evidence exists to demonstrate conclusively that exposure to obscene material adversely affects men or women or their society, the Court continued:

> If we accept the unprovable assumption that a complete education requires the reading of certain books . . . and the well nigh universal belief that good books, plays, and art lift the spirit, improve the mind, enrich the human personality, and develop character, can we then say that a state legislature may not act on the corollary assumption that commerce in obscene books, or public exhibitions focused on obscene conduct, have a tendency to exert a corrupting and debasing impact leading to antisocial behavior? Many of these effects may be intangible and indistinct, but they are nonetheless real. . . .

Then, after recalling that the giant Cardozo once said all laws in Western civilization are "guided by a robust common sense," the *Slaton* opinion firmly and finally disposes of the there's-no-evidence argument:

> The sum of experience, including that of the past two decades, affords an ample basis for legislatures to conclude that a sensitive, key relationship of human existence, central to family life, community welfare, and the development of human personality, can be debased and distorted by crass commercial exploitation of sex. Nothing in the Constitution prohibits a State from reaching such a conclusion and acting on it legislatively simply because there is no conclusive evidence or empirical data.

It is important to note that *Miller*, *Slaton*, and the other opinions issued ten years ago dealt with the sale or exhibition of obscene movies, books, magazines, or pictures only, and that none dealt with radio or television. In 1978, the Court grappled with offensive radio-programming.

In *Federal Communications Commission* v. *Pacifica Foundation* (popularly, "The Seven Dirty Words Case"), the issue was not whether society could regulate the broadcasting of material which was obscene. That was conceded. The issue was whether society, in the form of the FCC, could constitutionally regulate a radio broadcast admittedly not within the *Miller* definition of obscenity but nevertheless "indecent." In other words, is there a level of radio programming not quite sinking to the level of legal obscenity (*Miller* definition) which admittedly would be protected by the First Amendment if it appeared in print in a book, but which is immune from that protection because it comes over public airwaves and, as it were, is crammed down our ears? The Court decided there is such a level of programming, in a decision with far-reaching implications for cable and other subscription television.

The case arose when a New York City radio station broadcast a George

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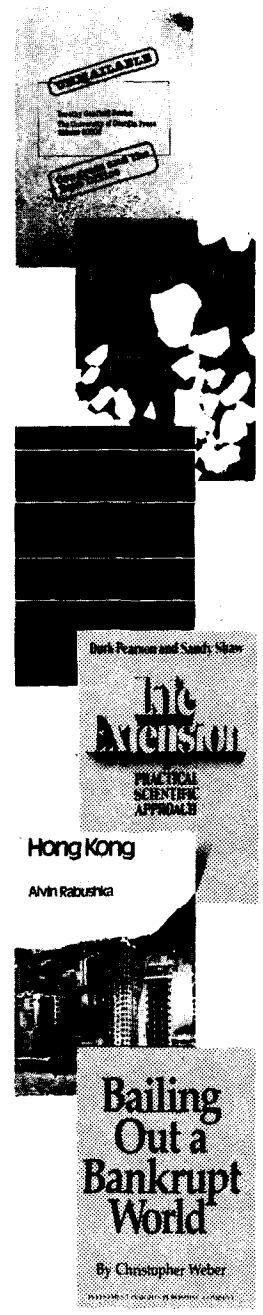

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Carlin "Filthy Words" monologue one mid-afternoon using language usually associated with the gutter (although at the time, in 1973, it also was finding its way onto some presidential tapes). A man who heard the broadcast while driving with his young son complained to the FCC. In upholding the Commission's disciplinary measure against the station, the Court held that in their context (context being all important) the offending words occupied the same place in the hierarchy of First Amendment values as did legal obscenity, i.e., their value is clearly outweighed "by the social interest in order and morality."

Noting that of all forms of communication it is broadcasting which has received the most limited First Amendment protection, the Court emphasized two reasons for this: (1) radio has "established a uniquely pervasive presence" in American society, and (2) broadcasting is uniquely accessible to children of all ages. As to the first, the Court stated that in the case of patently offensive, indecent material being broadcast in the privacy of the home, the "individual's right to be left alone plainly outweighs the First Amendment rights of an intruder." It brushed aside the fact that before the Carlin program there had been an advisory caution. As to the second, the Court reaffirmed its earlier recognition of "the government's interest in the 'well-being of its youth' and in supporting 'parents'' claim to authority in their households." This second reason the Supreme Court again affirmed recently in the "Kiddie-Porn" case.

The Founding Fathers, while roundly applauding *Slaton* and *Pacifica,* would probably have wondered why the Supreme Court had to decide them. After all, did the Fathers not state the obvious: the liberty which the Constitution so boldly sought to safeguard could exist only in an ordered and moral society.

To the Founders, the question would not be why the reasoning of *Pacifica* should not apply with equal force to cable and other subscription TV but why the process of reasoning from legal precedent should be necessary to censor material like the visual counterpart of Carlin's seven dirty words. The Founders no doubt would agree with the unassailable argument that cable TV should be subject to the same content restrictions as the FCC imposes on commercial TV (and commercial radio as in *Pacifica*). The argument the Founders would feel more compelling is the more fundamental one that "the social interest in order and morality" outweighs any value found in much of what today invades the lives, assaults the "sensibilities of unwilling recipients," and helps form the values of adults and children alike. □

Ralph McInerny

FLANNERY O'CONNOR, HILLBILLY THOMIST

Why the woman from Millidgeville, Georgia stayed home.

As an old Thomist—as opposed to a Neothomist—I have often thought that one could do a sort of cheerleader piece on Flannery O'Connor beginning, say, with her description of herself as a hillbilly Thomist and going on to the use she made of the notion of art as a habit, gleaned from Maritain. And there would be other things. Her quite Thomistic insistence, for example, on perception as cognitively primary for us. Perhaps particularly, her allusion to such things as the anagogical sense of Scripture, a notion she must have picked up from reading the *Summa theologiae,* something she said she did a bit of every day.

Such a piece could be written, but this is not it. That the thought of Thomas Aquinas, gotten first-hand as well as through such intermediaries as Jacques Maritain, had a tremendous influence on Flannery O'Connor no sensitive reader could doubt. It is, I think, a great tribute to Thomism as a philosophy of perennial import that it should have struck a woman writer in Millidgeville, Georgia as just plain common sense. Still, we should direct our attention to the truths shared and the way they cast light on O'Connor the writer rather than to their pedigree or to the vagaries of transmission.

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In one of the essays included in *Mystery and Manners,* having told the aspiring writers she is addressing that the kind of vision a writer needs is an anagogical one, Flannery O'Connor explains that this was one of the senses of Scripture the medieval exegete looked for, one "which had to do with the Divine Life and our participation in it. Although this was a method applied to biblical exegesis, it was also an attitude toward all creation, and a way of reading nature which included many possibilities, and I think it is this enlarged view of the human scene that the fiction writer has to cultivate if he is ever going to write stories that have any chance of becoming a permanent part of our literature." Surely this is one of the most remarkable statements by a twentieth-century author one could possibly imagine. A writer must seek a vision of human life which sees the deeds of creatures in relation to God. The deepest sense of life is religious. Literature, in some way, is identified with this sense of the religious at the heart of human existence.

Now the last thing in the world we expect from Flannery O'Connor is a pious remark. It would be wholly wrong to imagine that she took it as the purpose of literature to be edifying in some obvious sort of way. A fortiori, her conception of the vision

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required of a serious writer did not get translated into a sectarian effort. Nonetheless, the question of the relation of Flannery O'Connor's work to the fact that she was a Catholic has been raised, even if somewhat peripherally, by Marion Montgomery in *Why Flannery O'Connor Stayed Home*, Volume 1 of a trilogy on American writers.* This dense, learned, and ebullient book is one that every fan of Flannery O'Connor will want to own. Not only does Montgomery know the published canon; he has also made good use of the novelist's papers and personal library. When he cites marginalia from O'Connor's copy of Maritain's *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, we know at once that he speaks with unusual authority.

The question of the importance of O'Connor's Catholicism for her fiction must take into account several factors which do not, at first blush, seem facets of the same diamond. On the one hand, in the essays collected in *Mystery and Manners*, O'Connor often speaks of the importance her religious faith has for her writing, providing her with an outlook, a scale of values which form a hierarchy at once ontological and imaginative. Clearly she is a writer for whom being a Catholic is central to her conception of the writing vocation. On the other hand, O'Connor speaks with acerb wit of those who employ Catholicism as a sort of procrustean bed on which to measure the events of their stories. Montgomery puts us in touch with the reviews Flannery O'Connor wrote for *The Bulletin*, the Catholic diocesan paper of Georgia. He quotes her insistence that "the explanation for any good writer is first that he knows how to write and that writing is his vocation." Of particular interest is her opposition to the "assumption that there is a brand of criticism special to Catholics rather than that any good criticism will reflect a Catholic view of reality." (Surely the affirmation in that remark is more striking than her opposition.) A third fact is that Flannery O'Connor almost never wrote about Catholics.

J.F. Powers is a writer O'Connor particularly admired; it is difficult to think of a Powers story that does not have priests for its subject. Frank O'Connor described Powers's usual subjects as constituting a submerged population and he argued, in *The Mirror and the Roadway*, that this is what any successful short-story writer must find. If that is true, Flannery O'Connor's submerged population could be said to be White Trash, or people very near that category. By and large her characters are religious in a fundamentalist, Baptist sort of way; they are most interesting when, as in the novels *Wise Blood* and *The Violent Bear It Away*, they are obsessed with religion.

Does she look condescendingly on her troubled believers, contrasting them with cool and cosmopolitan Catholics? Hardly. What comes through is the conviction that individual human lives, the deeds of everyday, are fraught with an eternal significance. The world of O'Connor's stories could not be more concrete. We know what her characters are wearing and the look in their eye, we know the mud and dust of the roads, the aspect of a lake or an urban park. Yet her stories are otherworldly: the stakes are heaven or hell. This basic Christian belief is our author's as well and, if only for the space of a good read, you are caught up in her anagogical vision.

It is here we find, I think, the sense of her remark that any good criticism reflects a Catholic point of view. This is not a sectarian remark. It can be argued that Western literature has been reared on the outlook Flannery O'Connor insists upon. Why should we be interested in narratives about agents like ourselves, the rise and fall of their fortunes, their struggles to achieve their ends, their failures? It is not enough to reply: because they are like ourselves. Why should we regard our own lives as in some sense a story? When the artist succumbs to the view that agents are not the conscious responsible causes of their deeds, fiction will have died. This is the most provocative suggestion: art without religion is impossible.

How could Flannery O'Connor have thought otherwise? The believer who sets aside his creed and finds no daily pertinence of it will not for long remain a believer. Faith permeates life, gives it shape and meaning, confers an awful importance on the choices of human persons. Flannery O'Connor was a Catholic all week long and she could not have seen the world differently than she did. Sin and grace and salvation are not the odd tenets of rednecks. They are the categories without which Western literature is unintelligible. Aspiring to contribute to that literature, O'Connor was aware that there were some who thought—wrongly—that literature can flourish in the absence of the Christian outlook on human existence.

Imagine all the ways she could have gone as a writer, believing as she did. Her reviews in the diocesan weekly often touched, it seems, on bad or inadequate ways of seeing the relevance of belief for art. A superficial notion that art should edify produces stories from which sin is absent. This absence is a literary inadequacy. How can significant human action be portrayed if man's sinfulness is ignored? But if recognition of sin is artistically required, art demands that grace too be acknowledged. The point is that the religious is not something added on to an otherwise already satisfying conception of human action.

The first duty of the artist is to produce an excellent artifact. *Ars est recta ratio factibilium.* This Thomistic conception freed O'Connor from the notion that art is self-expression, a wishing of her own subjectivity onto her readers. Like Conrad, she wants above all to make us see, and see the way things are. This is what writing *truly* means. Objectivity is the truth of art. O'Connor's faith bore on the way things are, here and hereafter; that is why the Catholic vision, the anagogical vision, is intrinsic to her art.

It may be thought that, whatever her intention, O'Connor would have had to see all lives in the same way, homogenizing them according to the tenets of her religious belief. This objection may involve a grievous misunderstanding of Christianity. If all human persons have a common vocation, they are not called to be indistinguishable from one another. Quite the contrary. No human person is superfluous because each human person is a peculiar and unique possibility. It is the countless variety of human lives, in their fallen form and in their potential perfection, that strikes a writer like Flannery O'Connor.

Catholic critics complained of her stories. The recurrent charge was that she wrote only of grotesques. Her reply? We are all grotesque. That is, we are all fallen, sinners, in need of grace. Who are the nice people she is ignoring? One marvels at the sureness and compassion with which she handles her characters, yet she is never sentimental. Updike said of Salinger that not even God loves his creatures as much as Salinger does his. The free creature can damn himself and it is sentimental to want to rewrite the rules afterward so that everyone is really a winner. That would trivialize life, make it unserious. It leads philosophers to invent a Problem of Evil and blame God because we abuse our freedom. In Flannery O'Connor's stories, people are on their way to heaven or hell, doubtless via purgatory. In this lies their fascination. Make them products of their environment, playthings of their genes, anything else than centers of freedom, and they could no longer interest us.

Montgomery's title mocks the critic who assumed that Flannery O'Connor wanted to escape the South she wrote of. But after a stay in the North, she returned gladly to Georgia. An artist to the tips of her toes, she showed little interest in the literary life, the Manhattan hothouse, the campus critics. She did not spurn praise she felt she had earned by what she had written. But praise was not the point. The point was to do something well. To produce excellent artifacts. Home is a good place to do that. There is no place where it is easy. □

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EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

by Daniel N. Robinson

The 18-member National Commission on Excellence in Education has reignited our seasonal debates on the quality of American education by characterizing it as ". . . a rising tide of mediocrity." Students of the national "culture" (and its vaunted *pluralism*) surely did not need the Commission's findings to discern the downward drift of our corporate intelligence. We knew already that there are some 23 million functional illiterates in our society; that 13 percent of our teenage population fits this description; that the rate is twice as high for black teenagers (whose unemployment rate is noncoincidentally twice as high as well); that average scores on standardized achievement tests such as the College Boards have been declining without pause since the 1960s. Thus, although there wasn't much new in the Commission report, we may be thankful that a wider audience has been alerted to the magnitude of the problem. Of course, with 23 million functional illiterates there is an unwholesomely low ceiling on the fraction of the citizenry that might be aroused, and once the total cost of the correctives becomes known the ceiling is likely to be considerably lower.

The Commission performed its duties admirably in delineating the nature and degree of the impoverishment but was somewhat off the mark in setting forth recommendations. Chief among these are (a) lengthening the school day and the school year; (b) requiring three years of both science and mathematics as well as two years of a foreign language; and (c) providing strong financial incentives at the entry-level in order to encourage the better university graduates to consider careers in elementary- and secondary-school teaching. There are good reasons to be skeptical of each of these recommendations.

The value of increasing the time a student spends in school is determined entirely by the quality of instruction provided. On the whole, our public schools—particularly in the larger suburban and metropolitan districts—are so toxic to intellect, so dispiriting and aimless, as to raise the gravest doubts about the value of increased exposure. It is true that our German, Japanese, and Russian future competitors are in school 10 to 15 percent longer than their American counterparts, but the important difference is not in time; it is in the disciplined academic standards they are obliged to respect.

The curricular demands recommended by the Commission are, of course, unexceptionable, but we have every reason to worry about the preparation of many of the teachers of these basic subjects. It bears repeating that our public-school systems are still very much in the thrall of "educationists" whose own educations have been bloated with offerings of the "Ed-Psych" variety. In the sciences especially, where knowledge is cumulative and where theoretical foundations undergo periodic eruptions, one can only wonder how *basic* a scientific education can be provided by many or perhaps most of our public schools. Even where the faculty is able, eager, and devoted, the system-wide textbook adoptions generally seek out the commonest denominator—the book that most of the faculty can "teach out of." Often overlooked when curricular reforms are discussed is that any fundamental change is likely to affect instruction at all grades below and above the grade scheduled for the reform. One cannot decide, for example, to begin Algebra in Grade-9 unless the students have been prepared in Grade-8. But beyond these formidable logistical problems there is this painful social fact: any serious return to "basics," coupled with a serious revival of traditional standards of performance, will yield awesome failure-rates over the short run and rather stark meritocratic consequences over the long run. I shall return to this anon.

Any attempt to adjust salary schedules will surely come face to face with some variety of Shankerism, not to mention the durable infantry of the National Educational Association (NEA). Mr. Shanker has (predictably) agreed on the need to increase instructional time as long as there are commensurate increases in salary! What the Commission failed to recognize, however, is that salary never was the basis upon which the brightest young men and women chose careers in teaching and it is not the basis upon which such individuals will choose them today. It is quite rare in my own university for the outstanding student to make such a decision, but when it happens, income is nearly always of marginal significance. In two recent cases I know of, both students had decided to work for considerably less in private schools than they would have earned in public schools that had offered them positions. Their reasons were not surprising; they wanted to teach, not police their students, and they hoped their efforts would be part of a larger program of socially and morally informed tuition. The Commission and many others seem to think that good students with university training in science and mathematics compare the salaries offered to teachers and to "hi-tech" professionals and then choose the latter course. The first alternative, in fact, is seldom considered at all. Such students are close enough to their own years in high school to recall the ennui, the bureaucracy, the utter spiritual bankruptcy of such settings. High entry-level salaries might attract some new teachers, but there is little reason to expect them to stay, at least as matters stand now.

Where the Commission's recommendations fail most clearly is in their attempt to find an effective place within the system. Additionally, the Commission confuses a concern for the national culture with a concern for America's competitive position in the realms of science and technology. Let us recall that the Egypt of the First and Second

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Kingdoms was a center of extraordinary commercial power and technical prowess yet was strikingly lacking in that philosophical and moral character which defines every august civilization. Were the current Soviet regime to endure, it is entirely possible that it would come to dominate the commercial and scientific life of the world—but without ever rising to the level of a noble culture worthy of reverence and emulation.

With respect to the well-placed concern for America's future as a commercial and technological power, it is not necessary to transform and intensify *everyone's* education. The growth of science and technology takes place through the efforts of the very few. Until the 1840s, England had only Oxford and Cambridge with which to refine the intelligences of its most promising scholars. There is simply no evidence to suggest that by substantially increasing the *number* of its educated a nation increases the number of its geniuses (large and small). The peril we face as a nation is rooted chiefly in the inferior education received by the relative handful of exceptional young men and women who might otherwise lift an entire age on their shoulders. For this group, internal remedies are probably pointless. An ordinary school, with its ordinary faculty, cannot keep up with the top one-half to one percent, who must therefore be rescued from without. Interesting as egalitarianism is as a social theory, individual differences are an irrefutable fact of nature. Fortunately, bona fide genius often needs little more than time to tinker, so we might hope for an Edison even if there were no schools. Our competitive potential in the major industries of the future depends disproportionately on students with utterly unique capacities that all too often atrophy within contemporary school systems.

The future of "our Western civilization" is quite another matter and one that cannot be protected merely by our wealth. It isn't at all clear what the Commission takes to be this "civilization," nor is it clear that it is any longer prized or even recognized by its beneficiaries. The distinguishing feature of Western civilization is, of course, the inquiring mind devoted to a life of virtue; a life whose value is measured in the good works it produces and whose purpose is the triumph of rationality over brute fear, superstition, and animality. Ours is the civilization comprising what Matthew Arnold dubbed "Hebraism" and "Hellenism"—the Hebraic devotion to a soberly and reverently ethical life and the Hellenic loyalty to reason and its twin, beauty. Frankly, it is rather impertinent for any contemporary American commission to refer to all this as "ours," for it has been a long time since America unblushingly embraced it. Nonetheless just because it *is* a civilization—as opposed to some tribal custom or "pluralistic" smorgasbord—it is always there for the taking. And if we decide that our schools are to present it, promote it, extol it—win converts to it—then it must be a central part of *everybody's* education. But then what happens to "pluralism"? For once we choose Western civilization, all sorts of considerations cease to be "relative." Western civilization has a surprisingly settled position on a wide range of moral, aesthetic, social, and political matters. It is faithful to moderation and modesty; at odds with cant and nonsense; at one with discipline and self-sacrifice. It hosts an infinite variety of expressions but always around the central core of principles; principles of reasonableness. Is America ready to insist on all this in its public education? →

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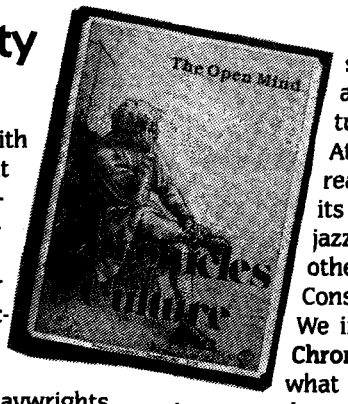

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NON-LIBERAL CRITICISM AT ITS BEST.

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A somewhat altered set of recommendations appears when the two different objectives of civilization and competitive advantage are considered:

First, the "best and the brightest" must have access to instruction of the most competent and energetic sort. Programs in science education such as those funded by the National Science Foundation must be greatly expanded. (Years ago, when I helped administer Columbia's Science Honors Program, I learned first-hand how much just a Saturday session of university instruction meant to gifted science students in junior and senior high school. One day a week they learned they weren't "freaks"; they learned too that the excitement for science they once had was justified, though their local schools had come close to extinguishing it.) The point here is that the truly exceptional students must periodically be pulled out of their local schools and nurtured by top-flight, productive scholars and scientists. To expect local school systems to keep up with such children is unreasonable.

Second, local school boards have to be given something to think about as they proceed to introduce useless "electives." I would have them think about this: the federally guaranteed loans for higher education will, by 1988, be available only to those who have completed four years of science, four years of mathematics, four years of English, and two years of either a foreign or a classical language.

Third, there must be a conscientious return to the use of nationally standardized tests (a) for the early recognition of promising students, (b) for the early recognition of backward students needing special remedial instruction, and (c) for the regular recognition of how well a given school system is meeting fundamental educational objectives. That such tests are somehow "culturally biased" merely reflects our national commitment to a given culture; one that places a high premium on mental agility, computational skills, linguistic proficiency, and a comprehension of essential aspects of Western civilization.

Fourth, State Boards of Education must have the courage to mandate *state-wide* examinations as a condition of promotion and graduation. These examinations will do more to affect curricula than any other single factor.

Fifth, students who create disciplinary problems so regularly as to warrant suspension thus incur fines that must be paid by their families as a condition for readmission. Families lacking the financial means to do so will have their children "work off" the fine through service to the school.

Sixth, merit increases in the salaries paid to teachers should be based in part—in large part—on scores earned on standardized tests in their content-areas; preferably tests such as the Graduate Record Examination. Failure to reach the 80th percentile three consecutive years should constitute grounds for dismissal.

These recommendations are but a beginning. It took about a quarter of a century to transform the American classroom into what is all too often a woeful fen of mediocrity. It will take many years to reacquaint American children with reality. The reality, of course, is that if you keep your nose to the grindstone, stay out of trouble, do the very best you can—you still may well fail miserably! □

PRESSWATCH

REAGAN ON A ROLL

by Fred Barnes

Jude Wanniski, the journalist and economic guru, has coined a truism about the myopia of Washington reporters: "The last place to get reliable information on what's going to happen is the Washington press corps, which reports over its shoulder." Looking at the recent past, reporters see a Ronald Reagan burdened with troubles of every conceivable sort, including a lack of smarts. And then they project this into the future, writing as if the Reagan presidency were inevitably doomed. It isn't. What the press has missed, with one or two exceptions, is the roll that Reagan is on, a roll sparked by the quickening economic recovery and marked by White House victories in Congress, rising Reagan popularity, and growing pessimism among Democrats.

With no help from the press, Democrats have caught on that issues are not likely to be cutting heavily their way in 1984, as they did in the off-year elections in 1982. "With a recovery—however feeble—under way, we can't assume that the national agenda will favor us in 1984," Congressman Gillis Long of Louisiana, the chief of the House Democratic caucus, told the Democratic National Strategy Council in mid-May. And it's not just the recovery that threatens to make 1984 different. The other mega-issue that hurt Republicans and conservatives last year was Social Security; it is now put aside, whatever the economic merits of the compromise designed to prop up the system. At the Democratic council session, a liberal governor listened patiently while Washington-based political reporters told him of Reagan's perceived weaknesses, some of them related to old age. "The complicating factor is his geniality," said the governor, unpersuaded by the reporters. "Why can't we have Nixon again?"

Seeing Reagan up close—a distance that can be quite unflattering for the President—Washington reporters often miss the larger-than-life image he projects nationally. Reagan has become the touchstone for every national issue, which is often not a plus politically, but he also has the most dominant political persona since Franklin Roosevelt. Yet to reporters, Reagan seems shallow, bumbling, unsure, sometimes old and tired, always on the verge of making a fool of himself. And some of Reagan's White House aides have this same impression. Like reporters, they see the man at close range, which can breed disrespect. It is the no-man-is-a-hero-to-his-valet syndrome.

With a twist. In Reagan's White House, the valets make their dissatisfaction with their boss's performance known to the press. This is a unique phenomenon. For all the faults that existed in Jimmy Carter's White House, this was not one of them; his aides did not savage him in the press, disappointed as some of them were in his presidency. But on two matters in particular—deficits and press conferences—Reagan's underlings give him low grades, and they let reporters know it. The result is that Reagan frequently comes off in the press as a boob.

Columnist Mark Shields and a few fulminating conservatives have pinpointed what is going on. "Serious political damage has already been done to the President," he wrote. "Weekly, more and more of his constituents view the President as an out-of-touch public man who, if he would just heed the wise counsel of his loyal staffers, would immediately change his economic policies. . . . What can be known now are the identities of the culprits who have portrayed the President as some sort of dotty ideologue who is intractable and not very bright. The Democrats would love to take credit for the job done on Reagan. But they cannot. The unfavorable picture of Ronald Reagan has been created and developed by Ronald Reagan's own advisers. . . . The President is being daily denigrated by his appointees on both sides of the [economic] policy debate. It is almost as though these Reagan appointees, who provide us hourly with tasty insider stuff about the President's indecisiveness or lack of comprehension, believe that the only way to 'save' the President is to 'destroy' him politically."

For sure, Shields overstates the political harm that has been wreaked on Reagan. Good economic times will repair the damage, regardless of what reporters write. But the Washington press, looking over its shoulders at the just-departed recession and listening to the concerns of White House aides, continues to look

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askance at the recovery and what it means for Reagan politically. An enduring economic surge that redounds to the benefit of the President is outside its field of vision. Instead, today's troubles can always be projected into the future. In not moving boldly to attack deficits, Reagan is following a "high-risk strategy," warned Steven Weisman in the *New York Times* in May. If "deficit-reducing measures"—tax increases?—are brushed aside, "Mr. Reagan would then likely have to learn to live with a deficit that could hurt him politically, double the national debt before the decade was over, and become a virtually permanent drag on national prosperity." No thought of a vigorous recovery here, but quite a good reflection of White House staff thinking on the subject.

An even better reflection was delivered in April by Rich Jaroslovsky of the *Wall Street Journal,* who is one of the best reporters covering the White House these days. The gist of his well-reported but Cassandra-sounding story was that recovery is at hand, but maybe it won't help Reagan get reelected. "Clearly, it won't be a panacea," a presidential adviser was quoted as saying. And what if there is a "bad quarter"? some aides fretted. Or what if the recovery isn't across-the-board, boosting the smokestack industries? said Senator Richard Lugar of Indiana, who is worried that enough hasn't been done to help the smokestack states. "A number of Mr. Reagan's aides privately agree with Sen. Lugar's view," Jaroslovsky wrote. "But they say the White House still hasn't found the right note to strike that will win back blue-collar white voters, many of whom supported Mr. Reagan in 1980 but who returned to the Democratic Party in the 1982 elections. A recent Reagan visit to hard-hit Pittsburgh became a public-relations setback when thousands of unemployed steelworkers turned out to jeer the presidential motorcade, dominating news reports of the day."

By covering the hour-to-hour events of Reagan's presidency, reporters are inexorably forced to dwell on the transitory worries of accessible aides—and to miss larger shifts and trends. This guy Reagan, popular again? Reporters find that hard to swallow, especially if they heard his untelevised press conference before six reporters in early May. Reagan rambled confusedly in that session, causing "concern among his aides" once again, as David Hoffman of the *Washington Post* put it. As a result, "his senior staff discussed ways to restrict such interviews in the future, according to the sources," Hoffman wrote. *Newsweek* added that "an apparently fatigued or distracted President spouted a string of ill-considered, often incomprehensible remarks on foreign policy that drew snide snickers from reporters who listened in from a White House briefing room. In one 35-minute interview, the President not only undermined the credibility of his recent speech before a joint session of Congress, but, perhaps worse, once again focused attention on what one commentator calls his 'Oakland' problem: is there any there there?"

There is, but you have to look in the right place. Since reporters come in direct contact with Reagan at press conferences, these sessions make a big impression on them. But the whole world isn't always watching and responding the way they do. Remember a recent President who was dazzlingly detailed and authoritative in his answers to questions at the press conferences? His name was Jimmy Carter. Even in the months before the 1980 election, he was turning in remarkably crisp and fluff-free performances at prime-time press

Robert Coles on INTELLECTUALS

For many years, as I have worked, trying to understand how all sorts of families make do, often against considerable odds, I have written articles and books for interested fellow citizens. Soon enough, I have received the expected responses. But on one score I confess to perplexity, even alarm – an absence, almost total, of reaction when it comes to an entire side of my work. I refer to the descriptions I've rendered of the religious thoughts and feelings of the children and adults I've come to know.

All I need do, it seems, is come up with a social conclusion, make a psychological generalization, attempt a literary analysis, try portraying a certain kind of personal or regional life, and there are thoughtful (appreciatively or reprovingly so) correspondents willing to share their evaluations publicly. But when I have tried to describe how, say, an old Spanish-speaking woman from northern New Mexico, or a Southern black child, or an Appalachian white child, or a small-town working-class man happen to feel about Jesus and His words and deeds, then the result is either the silence already mentioned, or rarely, a puzzled, frustrated truculence: "I don't see why you get yourself into all that religious talk! If you're trying to prove that people are superstitious, or need a crutch, then a page is enough, not a chapter or half a book!"

In my own case, the attention given religious faith is held even more suspect because I'm a psychiatrist – and so, presumably, "educated" and "perceptive" enough (so I was told in another friendly letter!) to "know better"! I should be what an intellectual ought to be – someone who analyzes how others think and feel, who gives reasons for one or another moment of history. The civil rights struggle, for instance: I ought have kept my mind on the various "variables" that prompted it.

Meanwhile, there is this young man from Birmingham, Alabama, speaking in 1965: "I don't know why I said no to segregation. I'm just another white Southerner, and I wasn't brought up to love integration! But I was brought up to love Jesus Christ, and when I saw the police of this city use dogs on people, I asked myself what Jesus would have done – and that's all I know about how I came to be here, on the firing line!"

Intellectuals also need to document how people's beliefs prompt them to live their lives. And I fear that when I started doing that I learned something about myself and my kind – how arrogant and self-centered we risk becoming: interested in our own heady assertions, and anxious to be the spokespersons for all those others, who don't write and teach and come up with new ideas, but who rather, try to go from one day to the next, and who yes, in large numbers indeed, keep calling on Jesus, not the intellectuals, for guidance. –from the June 1982 NEW OXFORD REVIEW.

If you are interested in exploring the beliefs behind the "data" – in probing the deeper religious feelings embedded in our lives, however much we try to ignore them – if you want to *understand* what moves a Martin Luther King Jr., a Lech Walesa, an Archbishop Romero, a Mother Teresa, a Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Polish Pope, a Simone Weil, a Dorothy Day, a George Orwell, then you're ready to look into the NEW OXFORD REVIEW. We are spearheading the renewed interest among today's intellectuals in what Daniel Bell terms "the sacred." Robert Coles writes a regular column called "Harvard Diary," and like him, our writers – Peter L. Berger, J.M. Cameron, Erazim Kohák, Juli Loesch, Dale Vree, and others – express themselves with clarity, verve, style, and "heart." Published monthly, we have been praised by *Newsweek* for being "thoughtful," and the *Library Journal* predicts we will "doubtless command increasing attention."

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conferences. It didn't help. And for all that is written negatively about them, Reagan's performances don't hurt.

As a rule, voters and politicians, unschooled in nuances of seeing the future as they may be, have a better grasp of the political drift than reporters do. Virtually every reporter I know thought Carter whipped Reagan in their debate in October 1980. I thought so too. After watching the debate, I was driving to Philadelphia and listening to Larry King's call-in show on the radio. Virtually every caller was knocking Carter mercilessly, notably for his comment about Amy and nuclear proliferation. The more I heard, the more I knew I had been wrong in assessing the debate.

Politicians sensed in 1979 and much of 1980 that Carter's prospects were not so good for reelection, though most every reporter in Washington figured that Carter would at least be able to beat Reagan. Senator Howard Baker, always a favorite with the press, might be tough, but not Reagan. In any case, there was a clamor among Democrats to get Carter off the top of the ticket. Just the opposite is happening now with Reagan. There is a clamor among Republicans for assurance that he will run again. The fear is that without him, the party loses, even to former Vice President Walter Mondale and especially to Senator John Glenn. Republican politicians know that Reagan is on a roll, his political strength building. But they sure didn't learn this from reading the paper or watching TV news. □

THE PUBLIC POLICY

WOMEN'S WORTH

by Bruce Powell Majors

"Comparable worth" rules are a new feminist proposal to use regulation to achieve equal incomes between men and women, by legally mandating that "male dominated" and "female dominated" occupations judged to be of equivalent difficulty by state or federal agencies be paid equally. To date comparable-worth rules have been instituted—at a cost of over five million dollars annually—for city workers in San Jose, California, and the idea of "comparable worth" was cited in a recent sex discrimination case—at a cost of $52 million—against a major airline. Today comparable worth is being considered in Montgomery County, Maryland, and elsewhere, but the "real target," according to Cornell economist George Hildebrand, is "federal intervention into the occupational wage and salary structure on a very large, and possibly even massive scale." Any such shift will involve a transfer of power concerning wage bargaining from millions of employers who know the particular jobs and employees involved to a small number of federal bureaucrats who do not have this information.

Bruce Powell Majors has written for Inquiry, *the* Washington Times, *and other publications.*

The "need" for comparable-worth regulation is based on the following statistics. In 1939, the median income of women who worked year-round was 58 percent of the median income of men. In 1981, despite passage of the Equal Pay Act and other anti-discrimination laws, women earned 59 percent of the median income of men. This according to figures offered at a recent congressional hearing by Dr. Janet Norwood, commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. But does this mean that the Equal Pay Act and other anti-discrimination laws have failed (assuming that they were ever needed)? Consider the following evidence:

•The 1973 *Economic Report to the President* contained a section on "The Economic Role of Women," which revealed that women in their thirties who had worked continuously since high school earned slightly more than men in their thirties who had worked continuously since high school.

•Economist Thomas Sowell (in *Affirmative Action Reconsidered*) reports that unmarried female academics earn slightly more than unmarried male academics.

•Researcher Helen Astin's study, "Career Profiles of Woman Doctorates" (in *Academic Women on the Move*), presents evidence that unmarried female academics become full professors faster than unmarried male academics.

In short, there is a good deal of evidence that single women and men with similar work experience do earn equal pay.

Nevertheless, considered as economic aggregates, working women and working men do not receive equal pay. Why? Because the jobs women go into do not pay as much as the jobs men go into. And why is that? The feminist answer, given to us by *Washington Post* columnist Judy Mann, is that "jobs requiring strength and endurance were given more value than jobs requiring tact or patience."

Clearly, this answer is wrong. Computer programming and engineering, two relatively male-dominated fields which pay well, require patience. Housework and its commercial equivalents, customarily female-dominated fields, are not paid very well, yet do require some strength and endurance. But the fundamental error in the feminist thinking is the belief that "value" is "given" by a central person or group—that the price of services like cleaning or computer programming is set conclusively and that "we" can change it, without any ill consequences.

Noble laureate Friedrich Hayek exposed this error in his classic essay, "The Use of Knowledge in Society":

> What is the problem we wish to solve when we try to construct a rational economic order? On certain familiar assumptions the answer is simple enough. *If* we possess all relevant information, *if*

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we can start out from a given system of preferences, and *if* we command complete knowledge of available means, the problem which remains is purely one of logic. That is, the answer to the question of what is the best use of available means is implicit in our assumptions. . . .

This, however, is emphatically *not* the economic problem which society faces. And the economic calculus which we have developed to solve the logical problem does not provide an answer to it. The reason for this is that the "data" from which the economic calculus starts are never for the whole society "given" to a single mind which could work out the implications and can never be so given.

Supporters of comparable worth believe that the economic problem consists of nothing more than achieving their "system of preferences," i.e., uniformity in men's and women's incomes. By overlooking the more fundamental problem—that of collecting the "data," the information about supply and demand for goods and services, which is scattered throughout the economy in isolated bits—they will wreak havoc with the economy, and in so doing wipe out many of the more positive contributions of the feminist movement. The main victims of comparable worth will thus be women, who will be affected in at least three ways.

First, comparable-worth laws will do for women (and a few men) who enter the labor market through traditionally feminine jobs what minimum-wage laws have done for minority teenagers: it will price them out of the labor market. A 1981 report of the National Research Council, prepared under contract to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, noted that comparable worth would result in "reducing employment either because employers shift to alternative, less labor-intensive methods of production or [if the new labor cost were paid and passed on] because consumers might switch to other, less expensive goods and services." Many working women will think they are being "liberated" by feminist social engineering, only to find that they are losing their jobs to machines, as school teachers are replaced by computer terminals, nurses by monitoring equipment, and waiters and waitresses (and restaurants) by fast-food enterprises.

Second, if women have nothing to lose by staying in jobs requiring skills that many workers have (and hence consumers do not value highly), they will have no incentive to move into traditionally male-dominated fields. Comparable worth tells the woman entering the labor force not to worry her pretty little head about a challenging career.

Third, the studies by economist Thomas Sowell and researcher Helen Astin cited earlier reveal that for most couples marriage advances the husband's career and inhibits that of the wife; single men and women in the same field and of the same age have equal incomes. Most men make demands on their wives' time and energy that prohibit women from committing themselves to their careers as fully as male workers in the same field. Were comparable-worth regulations actually to be enforced, they would work as a subsidy to this traditional marriage, by abolishing the wife's incentive to demand more domestic equality—the higher wages earned by tired or distracted women workers would provide them with (false) information that they were in fact successfully combining marriage and career, even when their husbands had not changed their behavior.

On this point, there is some evidence that comparable-worth regulations and other feminist social engineering just cannot be imposed on an entire economy over any significant length of time. Hedrick Smith returned from the USSR, a country that combines near-complete control of the economy with a nominal commitment to women's liberation, with the following report:

> In Russia, equal pay for equal work is an accepted principle, but getting the equal work is the problem. Millions of women are shunted into the lower-paying, less prestigious fields. Teaching and medicine are prime examples. These are practically at the bottom of the pay and status scales and these are the professions in which women are most heavily represented. In industry, women work mostly in the light, consumer sector where, according to Soviet studies, pay and all other benefits are well below those in heavy industry (where men predominate). In farming, women provide the core of the low-paid, unskilled field hands while men operate the machinery and get better pay. Perhaps most indicative of the situation nationwide, one major Soviet economic study drafting a working-class family budget assumed that the husband would earn 50 percent more than the wife.

Such considerations have led some feminists to question whether the problems that concern them can simply be solved by governmental social engineering. Feminist poet Adrienne Rich, herself a socialist, asked in a recent book, "How much does this really have to do with capitalism, and how much with the system which . . . predated capitalism and survived under socialism—patriarchy?" Stripped of the jargon, Rich is coming dangerously close to posing the heretical question of whether feminist values are not best attained by private and voluntary means. But Adrienne Rich lives near Cambridge, where political power is often merely an object of contemplation. In Washington, D.C., where power is everyone's bread and butter, the *Post*'s Judy Mann is busy informing us that "labor unions, the Democratic Party and women's organizations are now supporting comparable worth standards."

This is hardly an argument that comparable worth will benefit women. Labor unions in Britain during the industrial revolution and in the United States during the Progressive era supported protective labor legislation and the "family wage" system in order to drive female competition out of the labor force. Labor unions in California in the early part of this century supported the institution of laws against smoking opium and other practices peculiar to Chinese workers. Labor unions today support minimum-wage laws, restrictions on immigration, tariffs, and trade quotas as a means to protect themselves from competition.

Because of uncertainties about the profitability of investing in a new ERA campaign, the National Organization for Women and other feminist organizations realize they must have a program to put forward to attract new members and contributors—if they are to continue to exist. This is not to say that feminist organizational leaders do not believe in comparable worth—only that they *have* to believe in it.

As for the Democratic party, its platform, like that of the Republicans, is rather often composed of empty words, meant only to appease some special-interest group. If working women are lucky, "comparable worth" will remain words. But if they are not, a new group will join the permanent underclass of Americans who cannot legally obtain employment. And it will join under an old and familiar name: "housewife." □

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MITTERRAND'S DIRTY TRICKS

by John Train

What did Paris think of the *Kulterfest* that Mitterrand's minister of culture, Jack Lang, staged before the municipal elections, I asked my friend the President-Directeur Général.

"Camouflage, pure camouflage. He must have known disaster was coming—the devaluation as well as the election results. So to distract the public he stages this piece of mummery. *C'était tellement bête.* And incidentally, your American contingent scarcely appeared to advantage. They may have been politically sympathetic, but why invite to a congress on the influence of culture upon politics a delegation that knows almost nothing about either? Mr. Styron, for example, not knowing our poetry, tells us instead that the Concorde is a poem. Dada! It wouldn't get him a passing grade in a literature course, nor did it impress the public here."

And the economic outlook?

"I suppose the only thing worse than being a Cassandra—having steadily predicted the mess into which Mitterrand would get my country," said my friend the PDG, "is being a Cassandra who then can't say, 'I told you so.'"

"Why can't you?" I asked.

We were having a marvelous lunch in a little restaurant just a short walk from his office, and in spite of his griefs the PDG seemed cheerful enough. "Well," he replied, "consider my situation. I have a fine company, as you know. We work hard, we do well. But it's a 'wholesale' enterprise: all my customers are businesses, most of them are big businesses and banks. All the banks and most of my big industrial customers are now nationalized. So if you quote me by name and some competitor passes on to the government your article containing my criticisms, three or four phone calls from the ministry to my biggest customers and I'm *fichu.* No, no, the prudent course is to follow the advice of Epicurus and live secretly, at least until all this blows over.

"Actually, an even sadder situation is that of the newspaper proprietors. I had lunch in this very restaurant three months ago with a friend of mine who runs the financial side of one of the top dailies. He told me that previously he had received a call from a government *souterrain* . . . do you know what that is?" Seeing my hesitation, he groped for the word. "Not a spokesman, not an ambassador . . ."

An unofficial emissary?

"*Voila,*" said the PDG. "Anyway this *souterrain* had called on my friend, to propose a government buyout of his paper. Not to the government itself, of course, but to a government-sponsored buyer, a reliable socialist. The offer was rejected indignantly. He will maintain his independence to the death, says the proprietor. But do you know what happened? Within a week there were 25 tax inspectors in the place, looking over his books: his expenses, his depreciation account, every last thing. *Twenty-five!* You can imagine how much time it takes just to cope with their thousands of questions, quite aside from how it looks to the people in the office."

Horrible, I agreed.

"And even that's not the worst of it. Like most businesses these days, this paper owes a lot of money to the banks, and particularly since the latest bank nationalizations, that again means the government. The proprietor knows that at any time the government can simply turn off his credit and put him out of business. It already makes credit available on especially favorable terms to his pro-government competitors. And his advertising from state-controlled industries has been cut back. No, no, his situation is grim, very grim indeed. He has the glories, but also the miseries, of being in the public opinion business. His duty is to broadcast the truth far and wide. I, for better or worse, am a technician. So I don't feel quite such an obligation to speak out publicly. But it's not fun these days, I can tell you."

What did he think of the Mitterrand government's new measures to defend the franc?

"Cosmetics, just cosmetics, intended for shock effect and to give the public the impression that something is being done."

Will the measures work, considering that the same ministerial team is still in place, having shuffled a few chairs?

"There is no reason why they should. For instance, take the crackdown on foreign travel. Principally, that means that instead of having our Riviera full of Germans, while our tourists go to Spain, the Germans will go to Spain and the French will stay put. It may help a little, but not much. *Bien sûre,* it will do wonders for Club Mediterranée!

"Then, take the idea of raising taxes to slow down demand. It may happen that way or it may not. Often the employee regards taxes as part of the cost of living. If they go up, he wants more money. In a socialist country, what he wants he usually gets. Mitterrand certainly doesn't have any friends on the Right, so he's got to reward the ones he has on the Left.

"Let me give you a particularly nasty example. What do you think

---

John Train is author of The Money Masters, Remarkable Names, *and other books, and is a columnist in* Le Matin (*Paris*), Harvard Magazine, *and* Investors Chronicle (*London*).

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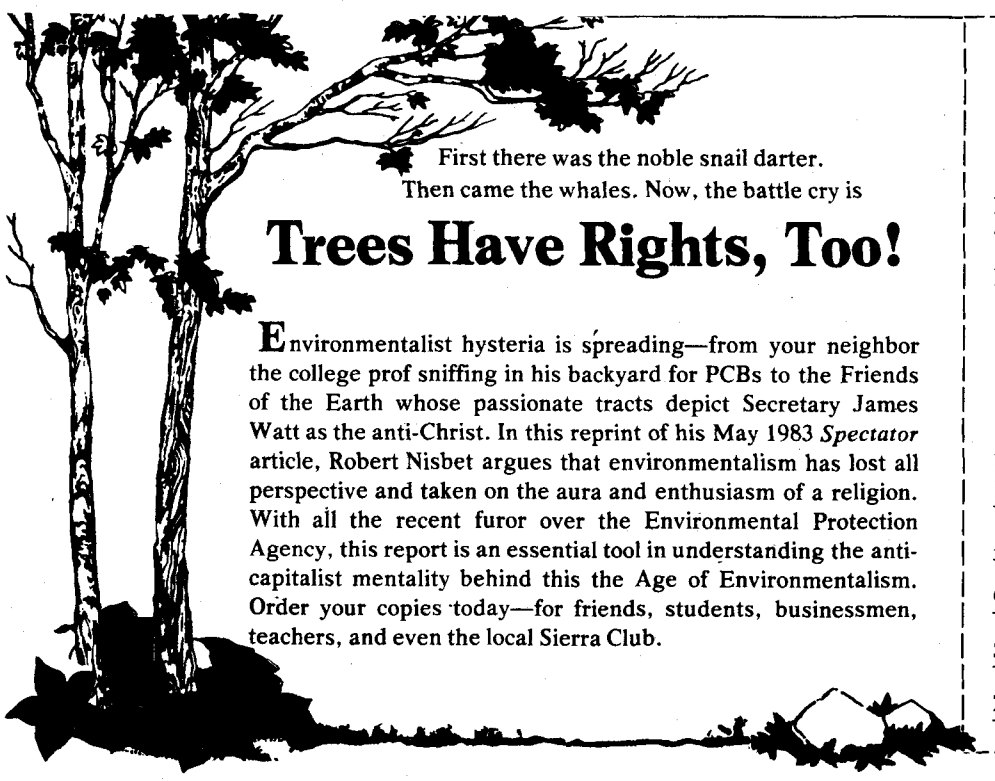

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the RATP [the railway system that serves Paris] makes or loses on each fare?"

I thought a while. I presumed it lost on each ticket.

"Yes," said my friend the PDG, nodding grimly, "but how much?"

Half the fare price?

The PDG nodded approvingly. "*Pas mal du tout.* But in fact it's much worse than that. The RATP loses 120 percent of the cost of each ticket. That's before the government subsidy. They don't report it that way, but those are the facts. The whole national railway system, the SNCF, does in fact lose 50 percent on each ticket before the state subsidy."

I observed that the U.S. has had the same problem, thanks to unreasonable manning schedules—featherbedding—which, however, we're beginning to get control of.

"Ah," said my friend the PDG, "but that's in America, not France. Here the transport-workers union is the biggest single component of the Communist Party, which is an indispensable part of the ruling coalition. And incidentally, the transport workers have to contribute part of their gross wages to the Communist Party, right off the top, as you say. Is the government going to squeeze them? *Jamais!* It's more the other way around: the transport workers could probably overthrow the government if they felt like it. Our system has gotten out of balance. The minister of transport, one of the most powerful men in the country, is a Communist, as you know. Transportation is a key part of our country's war plans, but as a Communist, the minister can't receive clearance to see France's own mobilization orders."

And the devaluation?

"Not enough. Let me give you a simple example. I recently bought a 16-horsepower tractor for my farm. There are two comparable machines on the market, French and German. Imagine my amazement on discovering that the French model costs a third more than the German one! A third! And here's why that figure is so significant. Our trade deficit is 100 billion francs, of which almost 40 percent is with Germany. To restore equilibrium there we will need to devaluate against the mark far more than the 8 percent we did. Until then, the hemorrhage will continue. All these measures that the government has announced can't change that basic fact.

"When this government came in, France had comfortable foreign reserves, and a good economic situation. So how does the new government cope with the recession? Instead of encouraging industry to become competitive and increasing workers' incentives for higher output, we push up wages, shorten the working year, pad the public payroll, institute all sorts of measures that we can't afford—unearned social benefits, early retirement, and the like—and in general, instead of belt-tightening, go on a spending spree. Obviously, that means lower profits, inflation, and pressure on the franc. So we spend our foreign reserves defending the franc, while blaming, instead of our own mistakes, the supposed overpricing of the dollar and the mark. Rather than cure the affliction, we packed the thermometer in ice. Now we have spent our reserves, and far from attacking the fundamentals of our illness, we've made them worse.

"We need a profound restructuring of our economy along the lines that Mrs. Thatcher is attempting in England. That simply cannot happen under the present government. Instead, we're going to get sicker and sicker. And with things as they are, I don't even dare talk about it officially, unlike some of my more courageous friends. So, quote me if you like, but not by name. Just call me Cassandra." □

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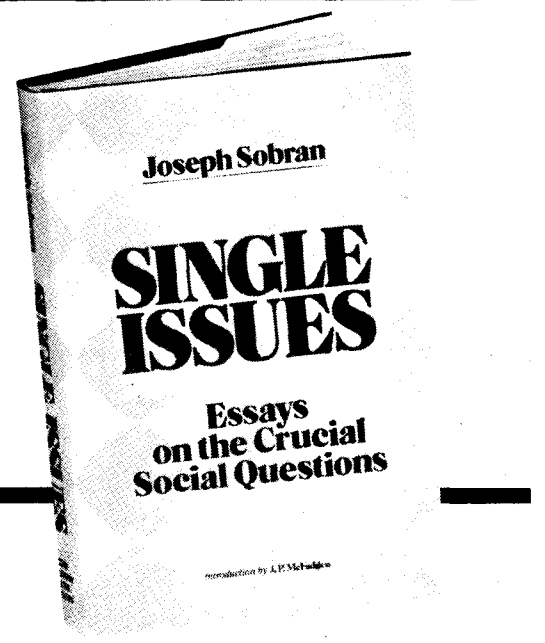

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JEAN-JACQUES: THE EARLY LIFE OF JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU, 1712-1754

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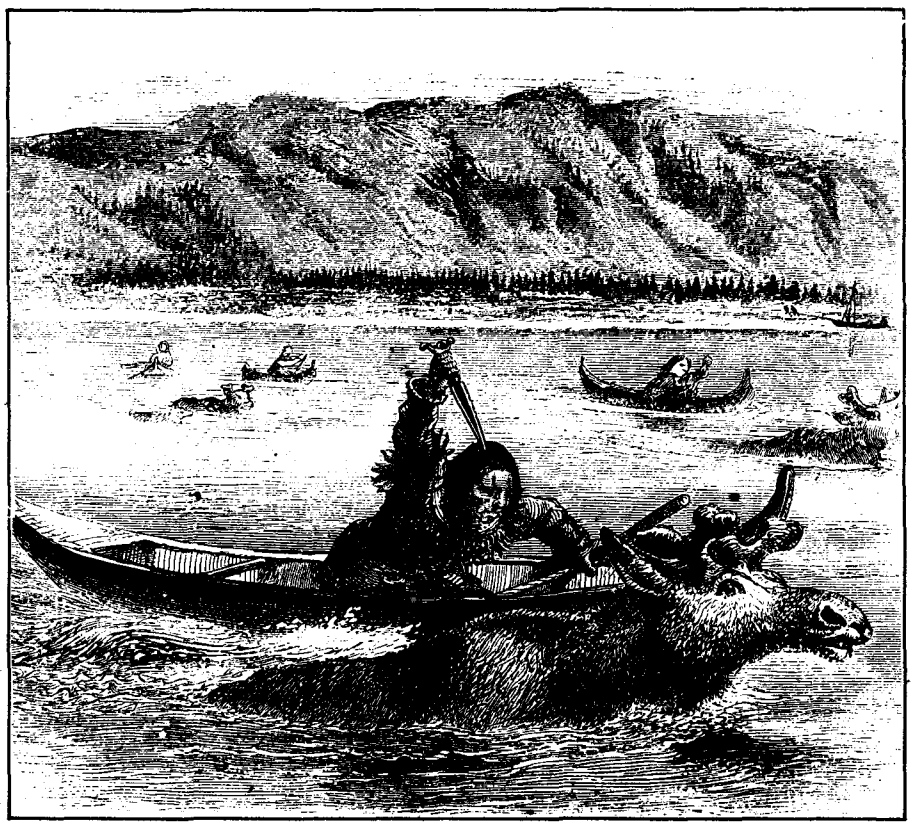
Robert Nisbet

The possibility becomes ever stronger that Rousseau will replace, indeed is already replacing, Marx as the premier eminence among intellectuals in the nontotalitarian parts of the world. Marx presents increasing difficulties to those in whom a concern for freedom and for the legitimacy of authority ranks high. Even if there were not the iron relationship between Marxism-Leninism and such totalitarian behemoths as the Soviet Union, China, Vietnam, North Korea, and Albania, among others, not to forget insurrectionary forces fighting to establish Marxist despotism, the name of Marx would suffer from other and almost equally profound faults. The determinism, mechanism, and calculated indifference to the individual and to individual will in history which once thrilled Western intellectuals in quest of a secular god have less and less appeal in this final quarter of the twentieth century. Non-Marxian preoccupation with such matters as the self, volition, consciousness, participatory power, and instant utopia in the form of monastic commune is hardly compatible with doctrines of a philosopher who flatly declared in *Capital* that "individuals are dealt with only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class relations and class interests." Marx, in one burst of admiration for Darwin's theory of natural selection, likened his own *Capital* to Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, declaring that the latter provided him "with a basis in natural science for class struggle in history." Such a combination of naturalism and mechanistic determinism is unlikely to captivate many Western intellectuals in our age of overriding subjectivism.

Rousseau, though, is made to order for this age. The collectivism of the general will, the absoluteness of the social compact with its abnegation of all individual rights, and the pervasive concern with government as the shaper of morality are accompanied by a preoccupation with the individual, with individual consciousness, sentiment, self-awareness, and self-exaltation without parallel in his time. The consecration to political community and its corporate legitimation that we find in *The Social Contract* and the *Discourse on Political Economy* springs from the same mind that gave us *Emile* and the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, each a monument to subjectivism and egocentricity. And there is finally the essential Rousseau of dedication to equality and to war on all forms of inequality. He is indeed, then, many things, all of them apposite to the prevailing trends of this final part of the twentieth century.

A bold mind is required for any biographical study of Rousseau, given his extreme complexity. Happily, Maurice Cranston is indeed a bold mind; also a learned mind, not only on Rousseau but on Western thought generally. Beyond that Cranston is a spectacularly tenacious and wide-ranging researcher. He has worked in the archives and collections of Rousseauian material in half a dozen countries, and in order to get a fresh start with the all-important *Confessions*, has gone to not only the draft of this book preserved in Geneva but that contained in the Palais Bourbon, presented by Rousseau's wife after his death. This volume, the first in what will eventually be a two-volume study of Rousseau's entire life, begins with its subject's birth in Geneva in 1712 and takes us down to publication of the celebrated *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* and, in the same year, 1754, Rousseau's return to the Geneva he had so extravagantly praised in the foreword to the *Discourse*. On the clear evidence of this book, Cranston is engaged in writing a biographical study of Rousseau's life and works superior in all respects to any I have seen or know. To his wide-ranging and painstaking research the author has added the perspicacity and intuitive judgment of the natural biographer.



All Rousseaus in the Western mind are given biographical basis in this volume. To those who are fond of seeking developmental-psychological explanations for major ideas in an individual's life, Cranston's chapters, especially the early ones, will be a gold mine. Is it any wonder, it will be exclaimed, that Rousseau should have spent so much of his life in preoccupation with equality and its necessary political conditions. He was born in patrician elegance in the most fashionable part of Geneva. Such elegance, however, was made possible for the young Rousseau solely by his mother's wealth and high-born status in Genevan society; Rousseau's father was an artisan, sprung from that class, and Rousseau was never allowed to forget it. Rousseau's mother died two days after his birth from puerperal fever, and although Rousseau lived with his father and two aunts for five years in the mansion, standard of living began to decline; the senior Rousseau's earnings as artisan were not up to it. The result was forced move from the great house and its environs down to considerably meaner circumstances in the part of Geneva where the artisan class generally lived. But the worst lay still ahead. In an incident involving an army captain, Isaac Rousseau fell afoul of the law and chose to flee Geneva and settle elsewhere, soon after remarrying and living off an inheritance from his late wife that had been intended for Jean-Jacques and his brother. Now Rousseau was obliged to live with an uncle from his mother's side of the family, and from the beginning the uncle made it clear to Rousseau that while he was permitted to live with his relatives, he must understand that he was of baser birth and lower class. Whatever feelings were generated in Rousseau's mind by this development in life could only have been exacerbated when at age 13 he was put in contractual apprenticeship to an engraver who, from Rousseau's account in the *Confessions*, was of uncommonly loutish and tyrannical disposition. Three years of beatings, deprivations, and constant humiliations were all Rousseau could take, and just three months before his sixteenth birthday he fled Geneva, to commence the journeys and sojourns and visits which would culminate in

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his arrival in Paris and the beginning of his lustrous career as writer.

Cranston's treatment of the early years seems to me exemplary, and I find him particularly good on the "sentimental education" that was Rousseau's boon for the years with the remarkable Mme. de Warens. She called him "petit" and he called her "maman," and that relationship lasted to its eventual ending though not, we are told, without a considerable amount of sexual perturbation on the part of the young Rousseau, for "maman" was comely indeed and only around ten years older than he. Annecy, Turin, Chambery, Les Charmettes, and Lyons all pass before our eyes as stops in Rousseau's travel from Geneva to the city of his intellectual dreams, Paris. Almost immediately he made friends of such luminaries as Fontenelle, then nearing a hundred, Condillac, Mably, Diderot, and others who lighted up the Parisian and indeed the European scene. In the beginning the tie between Diderot and Rousseau was very close, though they would later get on a collision course as the result of the maturer Rousseau's gradual estrangement from the critical rationalism of the Enlightenment and from the arts and sciences generally as he would set forth his sensational discourse on them.

Through friends Rousseau shortly became engaged by the newly appointed French ambassador to Venice, to serve as secretary and attaché. He was then 31 and more and more determined to find his true identity and mission in the world. That he did precisely this during his year in Venice would appear to be the unanticipated consequence of immersion in the political affairs of the ambassador, a man Rousseau did not like. He tells us that the relatively intimate observation he was privileged to have of Venice kindled interest in comparing it more or less systematically with his native Geneva. From this sprang the larger interest in comparative political institutions and the resolve someday to write a large work on the subject. That work never came to being, but what did, as a direct result of his meditations on it, was *The Social Contract* among other works of political nature. It was also this year, 1743, in Venice that led him, he declares in the *Confessions*, to the momentous conclusion "that everything is radically connected with politics and that however one proceeded, no people would be other than the nature of its government made it." The uses of power, in great contexts and small, would preoccupy Rousseau for the rest of his life. Cranston's entire chapter on Rousseau in Venice is a gem.

Increasing personal difficulties with the ambassador led Rousseau to depart Venice in 1744 and return to Paris, though with a detour through Geneva, the first visit since his flight from the apprenticeship, and a reunion with his father, though with calculated avoidance of his father's second wife. His return to Paris was not accompanied by the same kind of exhilaration that had attended his first arrival in the city. Perhaps it was the year in Venice that brought in him a new awareness of the hypocrisies, duplicities, and exploitations inherent in not only government but society generally. Cranston writes: "In disappointment, Rousseau passed from nursing his own grievances to more general reflections on the injustice of established social system." The whole experience of Venice and return to Paris "sowed the seed of indignation," Rousseau wrote in the *Confessions*, "in my soul against our stupid civil institutions, in which the real public interest and genuine justice are always sacrificed." Thus, in scarcely more than a year, the dominant themes of Rousseau's political philosophy were put in place: the ideal political community on the one hand and on the other the abiding imperfections of the social order in which Rousseau lived.

It was shortly after his return to Paris that Rousseau first met, became attracted to, and finally formed a life-liaison with, Thérèse. Such a relationship could only be surprising to those familiar with Rousseau's sexual life up to this point, one in which conquests of the well born and fashionable were not infrequent; and there was also the ardor of his special kind of love for the beautiful and well-read Mme. de Warens. Thérèse was an illiterate laundry maid who lived in the same hotel that Rousseau had taken after his return to Paris. Rousseau tells us in the *Confessions* that, although she was employed at the most menial labor and was almost totally devoid of conventional charms, she came of a good family. Intellectual exchange was necessarily meager, for she could barely read and couldn't write. As Cranston observes, she "had none of the brains or the culture of Mme. de Warens; she was, indeed, in the opinion of most of those who knew her, moronic. Rousseau himself admits that he wasted his time when

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he tried to improve her mind . . . Rousseau claims for Thérèse, on the other hand, that she had a sound store of common sense, which enabled her to give him good advice in difficult situations and sometimes to protect him from the dangers to which his own passionate and impulsive nature exposed him." The last is entirely credible, all things considered. In any event Thérèse would give Rousseau the special kind of sexual satisfactions he desired, would give him several children (all to be deposited in due time in an orphanage); and companionship at least of a sort for the rest of his life.

During the decade that followed his return to Paris, Rousseau established himself thoroughly in the intellectual life of the city and also became, as Robert Darnton has recently highlighted in his valuable study of the intellectual underground in Paris, a veritable demigod in the estimations of the penniless and generally unscrupulous hacks who made up Paris's Grub Street. That Rousseau could have access to the glittering world of the *philosophes*, which they could not, only added to their devotion to him as egalitarian and potential revolutionist.

In 1749 Diderot was imprisoned for intellectual offenses, and Rousseau became his regular visitor in the prison at Vincennes, frequently walking there from his own home in Paris. He tells us that it was on one of these walks that he had an illumination comparable to Paul's on the way to Damascus. In a newspaper he bought to scan while walking the familiar route to the prison, he saw an advertisement placed by the Academy of Dijon in which announcement of a prize was made for the best essay addressed to the question: "Has the progress of the arts and sciences done more to corrupt or purify morals?" Rousseau relates in the *Confessions* that when he reached Vincennes to see Diderot he was "in a state of excitement bordering on delirium." He had already composed the essence of his answer to the question, and Diderot forced himself to listen to Rousseau's almost ecstatic disquisition on how the major effects of the arts and sciences had been to corrupt man. It seemed not to bother Rousseau that he was exclaiming before the man who had made it possible for him to earn money and renown by writing articles for the *Encyclopedia* in which the value of the arts and sciences was stressed.

Cranston's final chapters deal admirably with the often confused and confusing interrelations between the course of Rousseau's thought during this period and his personal relationship with others in Paris. This was the period, of course, in which in addition to the articles he wrote on music and politics for the *Encyclopedia*, he was composing the aforementioned essay on the corrupting effects of the arts and sciences and then the masterful discourse on the origins of inequality, also in response to a prize-offer by the Academy of Dijon. From Cranston we gain a clear view of the progress in Rousseau's mind of a strain of thought that would make him unique in the Enlightenment: first, awareness of what Rousseau came passionately to believe to be the intrinsic baseness of culture in such a society as he lived in, a society filled with "hypocrisy," as Rousseau saw it; second, the foundation of this repugnant form of culture and society in the "fatal deflection" of man's moral and mental progress out of the state of nature from equality to inequality—the true source of all human vices; and third, a prevision of the emancipatory and redemptive kind of political order he would describe a little later in his article on political economy in the *Encyclopedia* and then the historic *Social Contract*. When, as Cranston relates in the very final part of his book, Rousseau went back to Geneva in 1754, which he had apostrophized in the discourse on the origin of inequality, it was with the certain knowledge, albeit still in large part unconscious, that his identity had been established and his mission in the world clarified. What lay ahead of course was more than a decade for the writing of such world-shaping books as *The Social Contract, Emile,* and the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, not to mention those such as the *Confessions* which would be published after his death. Maurice Cranston will in due time write of this Rousseau, and on the basis of this extraordinary, illuminating biography of the young Rousseau, we can take great pleasure in anticipating the second and final volume of the biography. □

TURGENEV LETTERS: VOLUMES 1 AND 2
Edited and translated by David Lowe
Ardis Publishers / $25.00 each

Adam B. Ulam

Just as his own contemporaries, so the modern biographer finds it difficult to feel entirely comfortable with Ivan Turgenev. The dilemma is well expressed by Leonard Schapiro in his perceptive work *Turgenev: His Life and Times* (1978), when he states that new materials about the great writer still leave him something of an enigma, though they do not change his "familiar picture" as "weak, uncommitted politically and unhappy about it, critical of the radicals but an admirer of their courage and honesty, humane and unpompous." If a writer as traditional in his approach as Mr. Schapiro feels constrained, though ever so gently, to reprove his hero, then it is no wonder that the adherents of the sensationalist genre of biographical writings find Turgenev an unpromising subject. Where are those political eccentricities and sexual aberrations which proponents of this genre would have us believe constitute the main interest a modern reader has concerning the lives of famous men and women? And how especially disappointing to find a great *Russian* writer so sensible and unwhimsical in his behavior! Over and beyond his literary genius, Dostoyevsky's life story will always intrigue us by the political martyrdom of his youth, and then the gambling passion and intolerant nationalism of his later years. The foremost of the great triad, Tolstoy, attracted worldwide attention not only because of his imperishable masterpieces, but also (and probably in his lifetime more so) because of his Promethean struggle against practically every established institution of his day.

Against theirs, Turgenev's life might seem almost banal, devoid of those spiritual wrestlings and personal dramas to which the other two made the whole world their witness. He also lacks the prophetic quality Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn deems essen-

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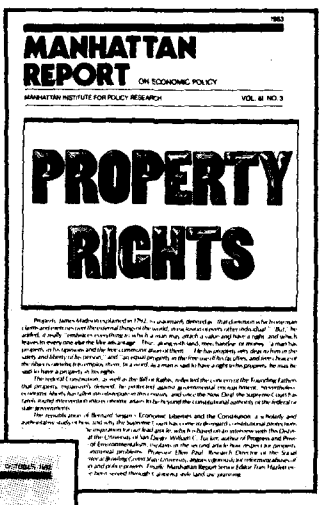
tial in a great author: "After all, the writer is a teacher of the people, surely that's what we have always understood . . . and a great writer is so to speak a second government." Well, one is drawn to the melancholy reflection that the intelligentsia's "cult of personality" of the literary great (and of the not-so-great, e.g., Chernyshevsky) did not greatly help Russian society in its struggle for freedom. Turgenev did not aspire to be a "second government"; he simply wanted his country to be governed in a civilized and sound way.

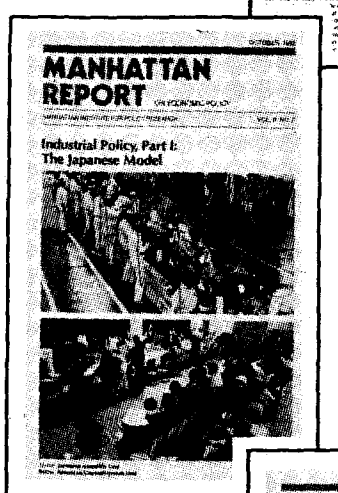
The tendency to downgrade Turgenev has even extended to his literary reputation. It is astounding to read in the introduction to this very anthology of his letters that, except for his *Fathers and Sons* and "two or three short stories," he is of interest only to a literary historian: "By and large, the vast body of Turgenev's prose fiction, not to mention his poetry and dramatic compositions, strikes us as singularly dated."

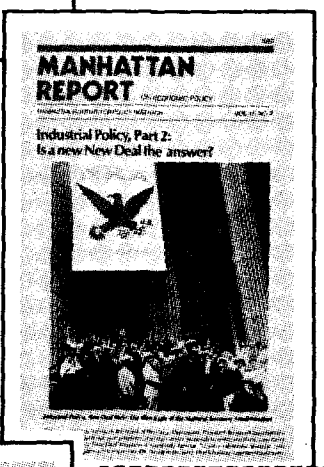
In fact, though, Turgenev is closer to us both as an artist and person than most writers of the great age of pre-revolutionary Russia. If some critics tend to overlook this, it is because his writings by and large lack that quaintness and exoticism Western critics have come to associate with "real Russian" prose. In some ways he is very much a Russian *intelligent* of the nineteenth century, as in his craving for personal intimacy based not only on personal friendship but also on shared intellectual and artistic interests. Thus his relationship with Tolstoy. After one of his earlier clashes with the irascible genius, Turgenev wrote to him pathetically, "You are the only person with whom I have had such misunderstandings: that has happened precisely because I did not want to limit myself just to simple friendly relations with you—I wanted to go further and deeper. . . . In a word I doubt that we will ever be friends in the Rousseauian sense of the word, but each of us will love the other and rejoice at his successes . . . ." Many years later, on his deathbed, Turgenev once again tried to reach "dear Lev Nikolayevich," in a letter some have found pretentious and affected but given the circumstances must be seen as both frank and deeply moving: "I am writing you . . . to tell you how glad I was to be your contemporary—and to express to you my last sincere request. My friend, return to literary activity . . . My friend, great writer of the Russian land, heed my request."

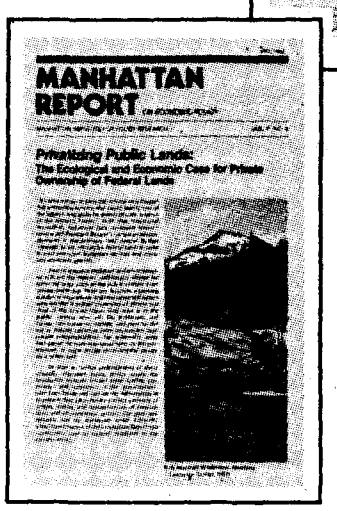
These are not the words of an envious rival or a poseur.

Much of the criticism of Turgenev's work in his lifetime turned on his alleged timidity. A few Russian radicals have used a stronger term regarding his personal ties with political émigrés and revolutionaries like Herzen and Bakunin. And indeed when the Imperial authorities came to investigate the writer's connections with the political exiles, he chose to answer their inquiries circumspectly and not entirely truthfully. Given the probable consequences of complete openness on the subject, and the fact that Turgenev by this time had distanced himself from Herzen's political views (not to mention Bakunin's), his attitude if not heroic was at least understandable. Subsequently the writer was vilified by Bakunin (who had been sponging off him for years) and even the usually noble-minded Herzen saw fit to hold his old friend to public obloquy in his *Bell*. There were cogent reasons for Turgenev to scorn replying to such charges—by what ethical code can an innocent man be required to invite persecution at the hands of an authoritarian regime? Why should Turgenev's mere writing









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of a letter to the Emperor entitle Herzen (who at one time himself addressed Alexander II in most eulogistic terms) to describe him opprobriously as "the grey haired Magdalene whose teeth and hair fell out from repentance"? Still Turgenev's inherent generosity of spirit led him to reproach gently, rather than to pay Herzen back in his own money: "Yes, the Emperor who did not know me at all nonetheless realized that he was dealing with an honest person . . . and old friends, who one would think knew me well, had no doubts about attributing baseness to me and trumpeting it in print."

Turgenev's dilemma, that of a civilized and compassionate man in a society permeated by violent political passions, of a believer in progress and reform in an intellectual milieu increasingly polarized between the partisans of revolution and those of reaction, was seen especially in the response to his *Fathers and Sons*. This great novel was for some a eulogy of the young radicals, and of their creed—the term it gave notoriety—nihilism. Others thought it a deliberate caricature of the "new men" and their idealistic strivings. The writer himself was appalled by the controversy over his book, a book that transcends the passionate arguments of the moment and whose main motif is a compassionate and insightful depiction of the perennial conflict of generations.

The letters, then, help us gain a better perspective on the man who in many ways epitomized, just as his stories often masterfully describe, the vexing problems of nineteenth-century Russian life. How some of these problems keep reappearing in our own time! The still quite young Turgenev confesses in 1849 to his life-long companion, Pauline Viardot, how shattered he was at news that the Russian army was defeating the Hungarians rebelling against the Habsburg autocracy. "To hell with all nationalistic feeling!" he wrote. "For a person with a heart there is only one fatherland—democracy, and if the Russians are victorious, it will be delivered a mortal blow." The older Turgenev is far from a Russian chauvinist, but he no longer believes that violence and rebellion are desirable pathways to freedom. The tsarist government's attempts to bestow a modest degree of political autonomy in Poland had only increased political turbulence in that unhappy land. And so we have Turgenev writing in 1861: "There is a rumor in Paris that a revolt has erupted in Warsaw. God save us from such a disaster! A revolt in the [Polish] Tsardom, like any revolt and any conspiracy, can only bring harm both to Poland and Russia. It is not by such means that we ought to move ahead."

As his political opinions, so has Turgenev's life been subjected to much criticism and occasional sneers. Why did this masterful portrayer and avowed lover of Russian life, especially rural life, choose to spend the bulk of his adult life in the West?

With his friends Turgenev was quite matter of fact about his sexual encounters with women of the lower social orders, an almost inevitable reflection of his upbringing in a serf-owning society, and of the social stratum from which he came. Yet both the gossip monger's and the biographer's voyeuristic impulses have been thwarted by the writer's reticence concerning his exact relationship with the great love of his life, the singer Pauline Viardot. Did or didn't they? Well, it is difficult even for a great man to transcend the conventions of his time particularly concerning a woman he loved. His long absences from the country of his birth cannot be attributed merely to his passion for Pauline (and after that passion receded, he still continued to crave her and her family's companionship). Personal reasons apart, he found the atmosphere of Russia after the mid-1860s when the great era of reforms came to an end intolerable. The government now turned to repression and partial backtracking on the reforms: the young radicals were now more and more drawn to conspiracies and terrorism. In 1879 he would summarize his impression from a recent visit home in one word: "compassion—profound compassion for our marvellous young peoples—male and female—who are simply suffocating from the lack of air." He had been entreated to stay and was tempted to do so: "But why, to what purpose? I was born too late or too early." He was born, or rather reached his manhood, at a time when an enlightened Russian could well believe that his country, and without any violent convulsions, could be steered onto the path of freedom and civilized governance.

As is almost inevitable in any anthology, the process of selection employed here has not been uniformly successful. Still, the composite picture of Turgenev which emerges from this small portion of his actual correspondence goes far in dispelling the denigrating myths about the man who was not only a great writer, but one of the most civilized and attractive members of the European republic of letters of his time. □

TUMULTUOUS YEARS: THE PRESIDENCY OF HARRY S TRUMAN

Robert J. Donovan / W.W. Norton / $19.95

John Lewis Gaddis

Harry S Truman, in retrospect, owes something to Richard Nixon. Presidents' reputations always depend, to some extent, upon the performances of their successors. But Mr. Truman had the good sense to pass away late in 1972, just before the full extent of the Watergate scandal became clear. Eulogies of the 33rd President therefore contrasted sharply with revelations about the 37th, with the result that Truman became a kind of instant folk-hero. Rock music groups crooned his virtues, T-shirts bearing his likeness blossomed on youthful chests, and Gerald Ford—no Truman admirer in his earlier days—now pointedly hung his portrait in the White House.

Mr. Truman also had the good sense to hold back until after his death his most pungent personal correspondence and diaries, so that when these were released—and published to a wider and more appreciative audience than one might expect for presidential documents—they appeared, not as an old man's vindictive spleen-ventings, but as the frank and feisty pronouncements of an American natural: the last unpasteurized, un-homogenized, no-artificial-ingredients politician.

All of this only reinforced a conclusion historians had come to sometime earlier: that Truman had indeed been one of the more impressive twentieth-century Presidents, both because of his role in laying down the foundations of postwar American foreign policy, and because of his anticipation—though not achievement—of domestic reforms Lyndon Johnson would put into effect as the Great Society two decades later.

It requires an effort, then, to recall that Truman himself left office after a humiliating rebuff by the Supreme Court (in the street seizure case of 1952), under accusations that he was perpetuating American involvement in a no-win war without congressional approval, that he had tolerated and even sought to conceal official misconduct, and that he had, as a consequence, brought the presidency into disrepute. Not only Republicans but Democrats as well—to Truman's disgust—ran against his record in 1952; his approval rating at the time he left office approximated that of Richard Nixon in 1974.

The great merit of Robert Donovan's second volume in his history of the Truman Administration is that it reconstructs, better than anything else in print today, the reasons why contemporaries regarded Truman's final term as a failure.

Robert Donovan has had two distinguished careers, and this book—together with its companion volume, published in 1977—is the product of both of them. As White House correspondent for the *New York Herald Tribune* during the Truman presidency, Donovan was able to observe at first hand many of the events he describes. Years later, upon his retirement from the *Los Angeles Times*, he embarked upon the perilous course of writing history, not solely from his own personal recollections—indeed, these rarely intrude in either volume—but rather

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John Lewis Gaddis teaches history at Ohio University. His most recent book is Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy (*Oxford University Press*).

John Springs

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from the mountains of source material now available at the Truman Library. Despite the research that has gone into these books, Donovan's prose retains a reporter's sense of immediacy; there is none of the detached theorizing or blubbery viscosity that afflict most academic writing. The result is a lean, taut, but vivid narrative that combines archival revelations with a keen sense of what things were like at the time. (In discussing Joe McCarthy's famous canard that too much "bourbon and Benedictine" caused Truman to fire MacArthur, for example, Donovan wonders, with the good sense that comes from having been there, whether anyone can really imagine the embattled Chief Executive imbibing the latter beverage.)

Donovan is at his best sketching personalities. Dean Acheson, he tells us, found it difficult to get along with Franklin Roosevelt because "if any patronizing was to be done, Acheson preferred to do it." Senator Knowland was "an intense moose of a man." General Harry Vaughan "wore a general's uniform the way people nowadays wear Levi's and shirts." But it is the portrait of Truman himself that is of greatest interest: he was not always as decisive and free from anxiety as he sought to appear. Donovan describes him during his last two years in office as periodically depressed, irresolute, given to whiling away long hours in poker games with cronies, at one point too shaky and exhausted even to sign his name.

It is this sense of what things were like, I think, that leads Donovan to stress more than academic historians have the extent to which Truman was seen, at the time, as a failure. After all, he did fail, prior to the outbreak of the Korean War, to build a military force capable of honoring the political obligations his administration had taken on in the name of "containment." He failed to prepare the nation for what he knew would be the inevitable victory of Communism in China, nor did he do all he could have to minimize the resulting domestic backlash. He failed to anticipate the Korean War, failed to keep China from intervening, and failed to end it. At home, needed reforms languished while petty corruption grew; meanwhile Truman's own blunt and abrasive personal behavior, so charming to subsequent generations, struck contemporaries as undignified, demeaning, and inconsistent with what most Americans expected in a President. These are all useful correctives to a view of Truman that has become somewhat romanticized with the passage of time.

It is important to distinguish these criticisms, though, from those that were being advanced within the precincts of New Left revisionism some years back. To followers of that persuasion, Truman came across as more devious than inept, as cunning rather than clumsy. He was, in their eyes, a cynical manipulator of public opinion, smearing legitimate opposition at home with the tar brush of anti-Communism while pursuing policies abroad calculated toward the relentless aggrandizement of American power. The Russians, to the extent that they entered into these accounts at all, usually did so in the role of innocent victims.

Donovan is too good a historian—and too good a reporter, for that matter—to accept that extreme viewpoint. Rather, his account falls within what is now coming to be called the "post-revisionist" phase of Cold War historiography. This viewpoint would acknowledge some American responsibility for the escalation of the Cold War: in Washington's failure to distinguish publicly between varieties of Communism, for example, or in the overcommitment that arose from the confusion of peripheral with vital interests, or in the tendency to exaggerate the nature of the Soviet threat in order to get needed appropriations through Congress. But "post-revisionists" nevertheless assign chief responsibility for the Cold War to the Russians; they stress the moderate (and mostly non-military) nature of the early American response; and they emphasize the extent to which the American "empire," assuming there was such a thing, arose as much at the invitation of those worried about the Russians as by the impositions of rapacious capitalists and militarists in Washington.

"Post-revisionism" has not received the attention it deserves outside professional academic circles, although within those circles, it is rapidly becoming the dominant viewpoint. Robert Donovan's excellent narrative, though not as analytical as many of the more specialized "post-revisionist" accounts, is nonetheless within the spirit of that approach, and could well serve general readers as a first-rate introduction to what is going on in the field.

To the extent that revisionism is active these days, it is more in connection with the Eisenhower Administration, although here (appropriately) there is a great, bland, complacent consensus: recently opened papers at the Eisenhower Library at Abilene have caused scales to fall from the eyes of orthodox, New Left, and post-revisionist scholars alike, and all emerge, blinking from the sunlight reflected off the grain elevators that abut that edifice, convinced that Ike was a genius. It is the kind of situation that cries out for Donovan's compensatory sense of how things actually were at the time—for he was there, too, and in 1956 published what is still one of the best journalistic accounts of that administration, *Eisenhower: The Inside Story*. One can only hope that he will now turn his critical historian's eye—as well as his reportorial ear—to the Eisenhower years as well. □

SIEGFRIED SASSOON DIARIES, 1915-1918

Edited by Rupert Hart-Davis / Faber and Faber / $19.95

Thomas Mallon

If you have read much of Siegfried Sassoon, you will, in opening these diaries, be letting him take you back to the Great War for the fourth time. You will have been there in his brutal and ironic poems; you will have been there with George Sherston in the only slightly fictionalized *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*; and you will have been through some of his convalescences in his actual autobiography (*Siegfried's Journey 1916-1920*). Now, you will feel, you are getting closer to the experience, the authentic heart and horror of it, than ever. Sir Rupert Hart-Davis, the editor of these journals, thrills you with their immediacy in his introduction: "Siegfried's handwriting was always firm and legible, but these diaries were written in tiny notebooks, sometimes in pencil, often by the light of a solitary candle in dug-out or billet, and some of the names of French villages and hamlets are hard to decipher."

Parts of the diaries show things as we believe they ought to be. We expect to see the indolent fox-hunter and part-time poet go off to the Front with a splendid sense of purposefulness; to see him get those illusions blasted out of him by the sound of 5.9 shells and the sight of dead men's hands sticking out of the soil; to see him turn bitter and protesting. And, indeed, we see some of that tortured movement taking place according to the historical schedule. On December 3, 1915 he hopes to die the same death his brother did at Gallipoli: "I have lived well and truly since the war began, and have made my sacrifices; now I ask that the price be required of me. I must pay my debt. Hamo went: I must follow him"; but twelve months later "the thought of death is horrible, where last year it was a noble and inevitable dream." In 1915 the stars above the marchers' heads are "immortal diadems"; by 1917 Sassoon wants to get some "death and bitterness and anger" into his poems: he wants language not to rhapsodize, but to excoriate. Early in 1916 he can find some lines

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Thomas Mallon, currently on leave at Cambridge University, teaches English at Vassar College.

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by Rupert Brooke "miraculously right"; a year later he is relieved to meet someone who has never heard of Rupert Brooke. It's the same thing with Robert Bridges, the Poet Laureate. In January 1916 he quotes him approvingly; when he meets him just before the Armistice he decides he's a wheezebag: "arrogant old Bridges with his reactionary war-talk."

You will note one date that can be inserted between all these contrasting attitudes: July 1, 1916. On that morning the Battle of the Somme began. Twenty-thousand British soldiers were dead before the day was over. From then on, as Sassoon's friend Edmund Blunden put it, the war had been "found out." Sassoon's diaries give an almost hour-by-hour account of his movements that morning ("I am looking at a sunlit picture of Hell"). The pages he wrote in the course of it, and which we see in this volume, are of incalculable dramatic and historical value.

And yet, even as one is tempted to see that morning as a psychological fault-line, one realizes that this would be too neat where Sassoon is concerned. He remained a remarkably indefinite spirit in many ways, even in the decades after the war (he lived until 1967), and one must not expect to see the consistently heroic giving way to the consistently revulsed. The diaries show plenty of continuing ambivalence. Part of Sassoon needed the war, and kept on needing it, even after he had seen friends killed and himself wounded. The war gave him much that he required, most of all an escape from the slack and prolonged childhood he led until he was nearly thirty, an "inane" life of fox-hunting and occasional poetastering. It gave his existence a certain purpose, however brutal, and "[a]fter all, becoming a military serf or trench galley-slave is a very easy way out of the difficulties of life." Sassoon is invalided back to England three times in the course of the war, only to realize he would rather be back in the "sausage machine" than listen to the bloody-minded patriotism of the fat and safe and overage left home in dear old Blighty: "They say the U-boat blockade will get worse and there will be a bad food-shortage in England in 1917. The sideboard in this Formby golf-club doesn't look like it yet; enormous cold joints and geese and turkeys and a sucking pig and God knows what, and old men with their noses in their plates guzzling for all they're worth." No wonder he preferred the carnage of the trenches to the carnage at the sideboard, even after he had made his public protest, in 1917, against "the callous complacence with which the majority of those at home regard the continuance of agonies which they do not share, and which they have not sufficient imagination to realise." It was this outcry that landed him for a time in Craiglockhart War Hospital in Scotland, for what the authorities decided to call shell-shock. One of the major disappointments of these diaries is that they contain no entries from those months, during which Sassoon had his conversations with another patient and poet, Wilfred Owen. (We do, in earlier notations, get to see Sassoon meeting Robert Graves, "a young poet, captain in Third Battalion and very much disliked. An interesting creature, overstrung and self-conscious, a defier of convention.")

Sassoon is not sure whether it is "cussedness" or "the old spirit of martyrdom" that keeps him going when he is back at the Front. But whichever it is, he can still find himself with an appetite for playing the "happy warrior" long after he has convinced himself of heroism's fakery. One thing that certainly keeps him functioning is a sexually charged protectiveness toward the men serving in his company. On June 4, 1918, in a nervous and despairing moment, he writes: "After all, I am nothing but what the Brigadier calls 'a potential killer of Germans (Huns).' O God, why must I do it? *I'm not.* I am only here *to look after* some men." His homosexuality—fully revealed for the first time in the series of diaries now being published—magnifies both his dutifulness and his losses. When a lieutenant is killed in 1916 he is left "longing for the bodily presence that was so fair" as he goes off by himself into the woods: "I wrote his name in chalk on the beech-tree stem, and left a rough garland of ivy there, and a yellow primrose for his yellow hair and kind grey eyes, my dear, my dear."

This is the young man in the poems "A Subaltern," "The Last Meeting," and "A Letter Home." A reader of the diaries will find the triggering incidents for many more of the poems he already knows. He will also come upon fourteen new poems, as well as many passages that would later be transferred into the Sherston memoirs. But the impact of reading this volume goes far beyond the pleasures of scholarly detection. It is, all by itself, another ticket to hell.

Sassoon's head was grazed by a bullet on July 13, 1918. (One of his own men—mistaking him for a German—fired it.) This wound brought him back once more to a hospital in England. He was in London for the Armistice celebrations on November 11, an "outburst of mob patriotism . . . a loathsome ending to the loathsome tragedy of the last four years." He would go on from there to live another half century, but nothing he would ever write would create the sensation of his protesting poems in *The Old Huntsman* (1917) and *Counter-Attack* (1918). He would continue to move, hesitatingly, between literature and sport, industry and indolence. He would make an unhappy marriage, withdraw more and more into himself, and, finally, join the Roman Catholic Church. Something about him remained forever unformed and unreached, oddly beautiful and deeply pathetic. □

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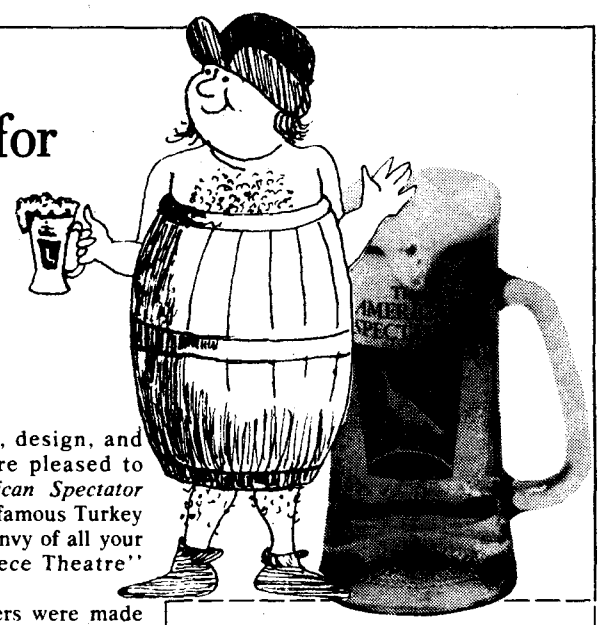

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SALVADOR
Joan Didion / Simon and Schuster / $12.95

Mark Royden Winchell

In her 1976 essay "Why I Write," Joan Didion tells us that the initial inspiration for her novel *A Book of Common Prayer* was the image of the Panama airport at 6 a.m. The image proved so vivid that she later made up a country in which to locate the airport and a menacing political environment for that country. Boca Grande was a Central American police state, plagued by an almost perpetual state of civil war. In her recently published book, *Salvador*, Didion takes us back to Boca Grande, even to the point of beginning her account with a description of the El Salvador International Airport.

Sooner or later, every writer with a distinctive voice risks falling into self-parody. That Joan Didion should succumb to this pitfall in a work of nonfiction suggests how predictable her view of the world has become. The turmoil in El Salvador is simply

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one more graphic instance of the center's not holding, of things' falling apart. Indeed, one suspects that this slim, overpriced book of reportage would not have had an appreciably different message had its author stayed home and relied for her information on the network news.

Still, *Salvador* contains some passages which could have been written only by one of our finest prose stylists. Consider, for example, the following description of the Metropolitan Cathedral in San Salvador:

> This is the cathedral that the late Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero refused to finish, on the premise that the work of the Church took precedence over its display, and the high walls of raw concrete bristle with structural rods, rusting now, staining the concrete, sticking out at wrenched and violent angles. The wiring is exposed. Fluorescent tubes hang askew. The great high altar is backed by warped plyboard. The cross on the altar is of bare incandescent bulbs, but the bulbs, that afternoon, were unlit: there was in fact no light at all on the main altar, no light on the cross, no light on the globe of the world that showed the northern American continent in gray and the southern in white; no light on the dove above the globe, *Salvador del Mundo.*

Didion writes her best journalism when she is able to establish a personal connection with a place (as in her elegiac essays about the Northern California of her childhood) or when she is discovering the inherent literary qualities of a public phenomenon (as in her rendering of the Lucille Miller story in *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* and her deflation of the buffoonish Bishop Pike in *The White Album*). Here neither is the case. Because her stay in El Salvador was brief and exclusively professional, Didion has no personal stake in that embattled land. And the closest she comes to "found literature" is her short characterization of American ambassador Deane Hinton, who—as a cosmopolitan man with western American roots—seems to be Didion's kind of guy. Much of the rest of this book is posturing.

If there is any political message here, it is that El Salvador is a Third-World backwater which cannot be salvaged for U.S. interests and that to take one side or the other there is to fall prey to the sort of self-delusion which afflicted Kurtz in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness.* Predictably, President Reagan emerges as Didion's Kurtz. Early in the book, we watch Reagan and Doris Day cavort on Salvadoran television in *The Winning Team,* a 1952 Warner Brothers movie about the baseball pitcher Grover Cleveland Alexander. Then, at the end of Didion's narrative, the Great Communicator is seen "certifying" El Salvador's progress toward political stability and human rights, even as the carnage and repression continue. The first of these scenes is simply a variation on all the tired Bonzo jokes that have plagued Reagan for most of his political career. The second, however, merits further comment.

The "certification" charade is required by an ancient liberal superstition, the Wilsonian notion that strategic self-interest is an insufficiently moral basis for a nation's foreign policy. This superstition informed the Carter Administration's disastrous stance on human rights and occasionally crops up in right-wing talk about linkage. Although we ought not to be too eager to embrace jackbooted thugs of either the Left or the Right, no nation can survive in today's world by allying itself only with those leaders whom we would want to invite home to Sunday dinner. After all, the United States joined forces with Stalin in World War II without insisting on his "certifying" human rights progress in the Gulag.

The salient question which El Salvador raises for U.S. policy is not whether we can impose *norteamericana* democracy on that troubled nation, but whether we can afford to allow a strategically located Central American country to fall into Dr. Castro's hands. Didion rather cavalierly dismisses that consideration by observing: "no one could doubt that Cuba and Nicaragua had at various points supported the armed opposition to the Salvadoran government, but neither could anyone be surprised by this . . ." What she does not say is that the reason no one could be surprised by this is that the Left produces its own Kurtzes. Fidel may never have played Grover Cleveland Alexander, but he was a mediocre minor-league pitcher before becoming the Robespierre of Cuba.

In *A Book of Common Prayer,* Didion's protagonist Charlotte Douglas is a *norteamericana* who lives in Boca Grande, lists her occupation as *una turista,* and tries unsuccessfully to sell her vision of reality to the *New Yorker* in a series of "Letters from Central America." *Salvador* is essentially Joan Didion's "Letters from Central America," published originally not in the *New Yorker,* but in the *New York Review of Books.* When we read these letters, it is perhaps best to keep in mind that at the end of the Boca Grande novel, Didion's narrator Grace concedes: "I am less and less certain that this story has been one of delusion.

"Unless the delusion was mine."□

THE BOY SCOUT HANDBOOK AND OTHER OBSERVATIONS

Paul Fussell / Oxford University Press / $15.95

Ronald B. Shwartz

Paul Fussell is a chaired professor of English who doesn't take literature —or much else—sitting down. It's been said that he is "untrammeled by reticence," but that puts it too daintily. In fact and by reputation, he is a bull in the china shop of American letters, and no wonder: he fashions himself as a kind of thinking man's John Wayne, wielding prose with a certain fetching swagger and acid humor, and blaming it all on nothing less than his stint as a combat platoon leader in WWII: "The careful reader," he writes, "will discern in all the essays in this book a speaker who is really a pissed-off infantryman, disguised as a literary and cultural commentator . . . I entered the war when I was nineteen, and I have been in it ever since."

Ronald B. Shwartz is a Boston attorney and freelance writer.

The careful reader may also dis-

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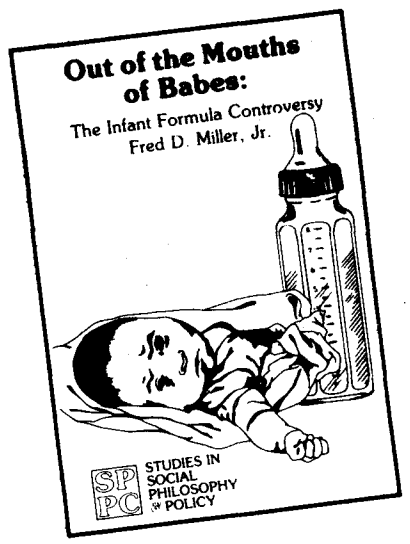

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cern that Fussell's portrait of the artist as ex-GI is more than a tad overdrawn and smacks of self-dramatization. But it's precisely his flair for such brash insight, for the dazzling connection, that marks the 34 pieces in this book and proves him to be a gifted critic and more than a garden-variety gadfly. And it's the measure of his quirky sensibility that his chief interests—books, manners, war, and travel—are so often viewed from the acute angle of out-of-the-way if not downright frivolous texts: *The Boy Scout Handbook,* for example, whose ninth edition he subjects to a book review, and then there are black-and-white photos from *Life* magazine, a censor's guide to taboo novels in South Africa, and even some cookie-tin lids from a bakery in Georgia, which provide quaint fodder for a study in historical revisionism.

Does Mr. Fussell climb such mole-hills and turn them into mountains "because they are there"—or is it because no card-carrying critic of somber mien ever has? "A serious moment in cultural history," he says, "occurred a few years ago when gasoline trucks changed the warning word on the rear from Inflammable to Flammable. Public education had apparently produced a population which no longer knew In- as an intensifier." Is it (as he claims) a merger of literary and social commentary, or rather a coy flouting of both, when he divines a link between two modern-day "prose genres"—classified "personal" ads and protest letters by authors aggrieved by bad reviews: "They are not as distinct generically as one might imagine at first glance. They share the convention of shameless self-satisfaction. Each constitutes a little arena of a very twentieth century sort of insecure egotism and self-concern, and a critic would be hard pressed to decide which bespeaks the more pitiable dependence on external shows of esteem."

Even when it comes to more sacred literary fare—like Waugh, Maugham, and James Boswell—Fussell's slant is off-center and mischievous, and a far cry from *explication de text.* What we get, instead, is a gallery of clowns, cads, and loons and their dark comic frailties, with criticism just a front for the juicier stuff of caricature and psychobiography: the "neurotic" temper of Waugh's collected letters, the "positively Hearst-like *chutzpah*" of Maugham, Boswell's life as "one of the most memorable satyrs of all time." It is highly amusing stuff but it all starts to sound like gossip-mongering in a smooth doctoral tongue. There is the "terrible truth" that Graham Greene cannot write English and there is Nabokov's "constant pursuit of the *outré.*" Poe, too, it seems, has "an urge toward the *outré*"—a phrase not unbefitting Fussell himself, who seems to create authors in his own image. It's as if erudition, which Fussell has in spades, were a license to entertain whatever the cost.

There is, moreover, a prissiness here vaguely reminiscent of Gore Vidal, but Fussell's only avowed mentor is George Orwell. Like Orwell, he revels in the tell-tale signs of class structure and social status. But the claim to kinship ends there. He is by far the snootier, has notably less moral vision, and is less at home with tenderness. And Orwell, while ironic, is always serious—Fussell's irony can't decide how serious it is or what it wants to do when it grows up: obesity, he states, is four times more visible among the lower class, "as any observer can testify who has witnessed Prole women perambulating shopping malls in their bright, very tight jersey trousers. Not just obesity but the flaunting of obesity is the Prole sign, as if the object were to give maximum aesthetic offense to the higher classes and thus achieve a form of revenge."

The last and longest piece in this collection, "My War," is also the best, and it points up the trouble with even the most brilliant of the others—namely, the infantryman's "disguise." Recounting his grim first hours of combat in Alsacé, France, Fussell finally remembers (instead of simply acting out) emotions for which the term "pissed-off" is apparently just a frail euphemism. Not that he ever fully abandons the hard, tinny, and rather loveless edge to his accomplished sentences. Inside that gruff exterior might be a largely gruff interior. But the heady candor and precision of this final, in all ways climactic essay suggest that almost everything else is indeed just so much high-grade fluff by a man who knows better and can't help it. If only he would quit acting as if he wanted to donate his wit to the Smithsonian. If only he'd let the old soldier fade away. □

SPECTATOR'S JOURNAL

FAILURE BY DESIGN

by Jeffrey Hart

When Ernest Hemingway's *Across the River and into the Trees* appeared in 1950, it was greeted with hoots of scorn by the critics. Yet before we can assess it, we must actually *see* it. If *Across the River and into the Trees* is viewed in relation to Hemingway's previous fiction it can be seen as a poignant and highly self-conscious analytic act. It is a kind of collage, consciously making reference to the whole range of the earlier work, acknowledging the real sources of Hemingway's early power, but bidding them a conscious and highly literary farewell. Its subject is failure.

There is Colonel Cantwell's failure. He has lied. He has lost his regiment in battle and lost his general's stars. And he is failing physically. Hemingway once remarked that the novel is about the command-level performance of the U.S. Army in World War II in Europe, and that, too, is presented as a bureaucratic mess. But at what may be its fundamental level the novel is about the decline of Hemingway's powers as an artist. When the narrative is most interesting, it consciously reminds us of his earlier works, and does so repeatedly. It locates the sources of literary power in the past, in earlier works and earlier experiences. It deploys these references in a collage-like way, much as Picasso would juxtapose an old newspaper, a pipe, a glass, a piece of a violin. But *Across the River and into the Trees* at the same time enacts its distance from those earlier sources of power. It is silly of the narrator to say—though the narrator here no doubt takes the Colonel's viewpoint—that Cantwell sits in a hotel dining room with "his flanks covered." That is, he sits at a corner table, presumably so that he cannot be joined by or sit next to bores. It is silly to hear the narrator say that the Colonel "reaches accurately and well for the champagne bucket with the ice." Much too often the narrative voice says stupid or irrelevant things: "Then she chewed well and solidly on her steak." This narrative voice draws perilously close to what would be in character for the battered and mentally scarred colonel.

Colonel Cantwell's military career is susceptible of being read as an analogue of Hemingway's artistic career. He had been a brigadier general and had commanded a regiment but lost it disastrously and been reduced to colonel: he wears "an old combat jacket, with a patch on the left shoulder that no one understood, and with the slight light places on the straps, where stars had been removed." On the loss of the regiment, Cantwell pleads bad orders, a touch

Jeffrey Hart is Professor of English at Dartmouth College and a contributing editor of National Review.

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worth thinking about. But he is nevertheless out of action as a soldier, and we may also think that like the colonel Hemingway by 1950 has lost those two stars as a major novelist.

It is possible that Hemingway reinforced the idea of artistic failure by naming the dying colonel Richard Cantwell. The name Cantwell suggests to any reader the colonel's considerable capacity for conversational hot air, but the name also belonged to an unsuccessful novelist of the 1930s. Robert Cantwell was a Communist and a writer widely regarded as promising. His artistic failure can be compared with the colonel's loss of his regiment, and other defeats. Given a grant engineered by Lincoln Steffens to write a novel about the San Francisco labor leader Harry Bridges, Cantwell found that his artistic perceptions and his ideology were incompatible. The projected heroes seemed really to be the villains. James T. Farrell ridiculed him as "Robert Cantwritewell." Cantwell's career as a novelist came to an unforeseen end, though he later became a successful journalist and a writer for *Sports Illustrated.* All of this was thoroughly familiar to Hemingway. His secretary, Juanita Jensen, recalls that in 1949 in Havana Hemingway had on his bookshelf a biography of Hawthorne by Robert Cantwell. In August 1950, shortly before *Across the River and into the Trees* was published, Hemingway heard from Robert Cantwell, for he replied in a letter from La Finca Vigia that began: "Dear Bob: It was strange to hear from you after so long. I have worried about you and waited for books. There was the Hawthorne, which I liked very much, but there wasn't any fiction. You were the best bet I had in American fiction and I wish the Christ you would write it . . ." If *Across the River and into the Trees* can be read as a retrospective collage of Hemingway's career, then Colonel Cantwell's military failure and Robert Cantwell's artistic failure may comment on Hemingway. He, after all, had tried his hand at a proletarian novel in *To Have and Have Not.* After the extraordinary achievement of the Twenties, Hemingway's performance as an artist during the Thirties became uncertain and uneven. From the perspective of 1950, in *Across the River and into the Trees,* Ernest Hemingway, Colonel Cantwell, and the failed novelist Robert Cantwell tend to merge in this literary collage.

Across the River and into the Trees constantly invites us to consider the earlier Hemingway. Colonel Cantwell, like Lt. Frederic Henry of *A Farewell to Arms,* had been a lieutenant in the Italian army and fought against the Austrians in World War I. On his final trip to Venice, the Colonel crosses a bridge over the Tagliamento river, into which Frederic Henry dove to escape execution and make his separate peace. The description of the landscape powerfully compares past and present:

> It looks quite differently now he thought. I suppose it is because the distances are all changed. Everything is much smaller when you are older. Then, too, the roads are better now and there is no dust. The only times I used to ride through it was in a camion. The rest of the times we walked. I suppose what I looked for then, was patches of shade when we fell out, and wells in farm yards. And ditches, too, he thought. I certainly looked for plenty of ditches.

In the central moment of *A Farewell to Arms,* Lt. Henry is badly wounded at Fossalta di Piave—and, of course, Cantwell was wounded there too. In one of the most remarkable scenes of *Across the River and into the Trees,* the Colonel returns to the scene and tries to exorcise the demons of that wound, and also explicates the meaning of the 1918 wound for Hemingway's fiction. We return to Hemingway's obsessive "bend of the river" where Henry-Cantwell had been hit. The old soldier finds the grassed-over spot and performs a peculiar but haunting ritual. He defecates on the spot, buries a ten-thousand lira note in the ground, and spits in the river. What all of this means, I suppose, is that the Colonel is the psychological owner of this piece of earth, but is saying goodbye to it, for, as this novel explains, it was here that Frederic Henry-Richard Cantwell lost his sense of immortality. Thus Cantwell has gone all the way back to the beginning, beyond Frederic Henry to Nick Adams, the boy who, in "Indian Camp," felt quite sure that he would never die, but learns differently from his war wound.

Across the River and into the Trees redoes the famous scene in *A Farewell to Arms* in which patriotic oratory is heard indistinctly at a distance. This time it is Gabriele D'Annunzio, who is presented as a phoney. The description of Renata echoes Jake Barnes on Lady Brett: she is like a "racing shell." We get echoes of the "good place" of "Big Two-Hearted River." "Then he was pulling open the door of Harry's bar and was inside and he had made it again, and was at home." There are echoes of the great basic rhythms of *A Farewell to Arms*: "The trees were black and moved in the wind, and there were no leaves on them. The leaves had fallen early, that year, and been swept up long ago." Hemingway redoes the ancient Count Greffi: the Contessa Dandolo "is over eighty, and she is as gay as a girl and does not have any fear of dying. She dyes her hair red and it looks very well." He echoes the rhythms of *Death in the Afternoon,* the magnificent concluding elegy, when he has Colonel Cantwell think about his own death and burial: "I'd like to be buried way out at the edge of the grounds, but in sight of the old graceful house and the tall, great trees. I don't think it would be much of a nuisance to them. I could be part of the ground where the children play in the evenings, and in the mornings, maybe, they would still be training jumping horses and their hoofs would make the thudding on the turf, and trout would rise in the pool when there was a hatch of fly."

Not at all surprisingly, Hemingway brings in his old rivalry and peculiar relationship with Scott Fitzgerald, a source of his earlier fictional energy, by alluding to a central passage from *Gatsby*: "They were coming up on Nestre fast, and already it was like going to New York the first time you were ever there in the old days when it was shining, white and beautiful. I stole that, he thought." Indeed, he did, or, rather, consciously echoes it.

In *Across the River and into the Trees* the energy is in the past and can be recaptured only fitfully, by returning in memory to his special fictional territory: "He took two mannitol hexanitrate tablets; since he had always been able to spit since 1918, he could take them dry . . ."

Nineteen-eighteen is the key year, making the fictional world and generating the emotions of the early work. That is the central subject of *Across the River and into the Trees,* which, though not a major Hemingway novel and certainly seriously flawed, also knows it, and tells us why.

Read correctly, it is an unusual work, and a graceful elegy on a major talent, full of wonderful autumnal touches. □

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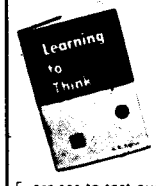

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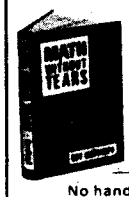

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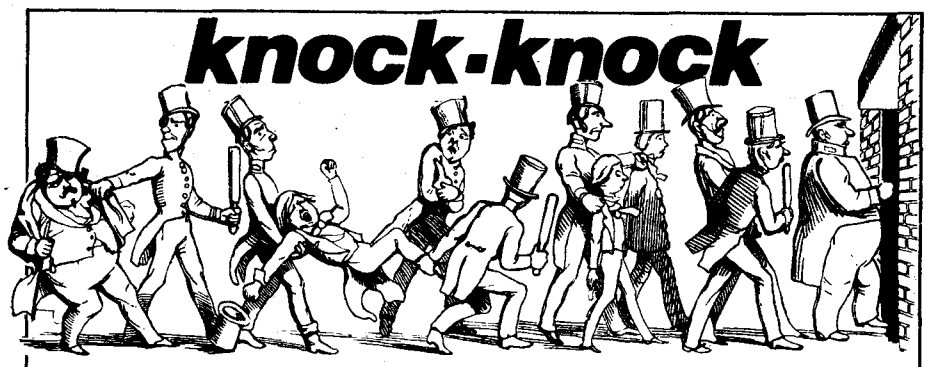

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CURRENT WISDOM

The Nation

A potpourri of preposterosity put together by West German novelist Günter Grass after a child's tour of Sandinist Nicaragua conducted by indigenous mesmerists:

. . . We arrived with no fixed ideas about Nicaragua, and we left, eight days later, deeply changed. . . . Actually, as I see now, Solidarity and the Sandinists have much in common. . . . In Nicaragua, the misinformation spread by Tass, the Soviet news agency, that Solidarity is counterrevolutionary is believed. . . . The revolution that was suppressed in Poland won in Nicaragua three years ago, and it still survives and believes in its future. . . . There is no capital punishment in Nicaragua, and the Sandinists at least attempt to impose humane punishments. No other Third World country employs such methods, which are modeled after those used in Scandinavia. . . . The U.S. government is not morally entitled to condemn the Soviet Union's aggression in Afghanistan or its pressure on Poland. Almost to the end it protected and bolstered with economic aid the murderous Somoza. . . . America's aggressions, like those of the Soviet Union, have become pervasive, and they can no longer be excused as stupidity. . . . The Archbishop of Managua has been outspoken in his opposition to the Sandinists. He threatens his parishioners with excommunication and foments strife within the church. . . .

Polish Pope—Wojtyla! . . . Will you understand that Sandinism and Solidarity have common roots—though I admit that the people of Nicaragua and Poland are not aware of them yet? . . . Imagine that Lech Walesa and Ernesto Cardenal, the worker and the poet-priest, are sitting at your dinner table. . . . As I understand Christ's teachings, that revolution should be yours. . . .

The American representative at the United Nations called the resettlement of the Miskitos "genocide." That is a lie, and it comes from a country that was founded on stolen land and genocide of Indians.

[*March 12, 1983*]

The McGill Daily

The *McGill Daily*, conscience of McGill University, features another report of New Age heroism:

When Harry Britt was a young school student, he experienced his first crush on another boy. Within six months of their first kiss, though, the boy died of cancer. At the time, Britt sincerely believed this was God's punishment for his homosexuality. . . .

Britt says all exploited people—gays and lesbians, women, disabled people, racial minorities—have been taught they have no power. . . .

"Thanks to our friend Ronald Reagan, it is easy to find people who feel alienated these days," he says. "Exploited people are coming together with the gay community. We are finding people want problems solved in natural ways."

[*January 10, 1983*]

Unitarian Universalist World

Cameos religious in nature from the Rev. Clarke D. Wells, interim minister of the Unitarian Church of Santa Barbara, California and author of *Sunshine and Rain at Once* and doubtless occasional evangels on men's room walls:

As onetime chaplain of the Albert Schweitzer Motorcycle Club in Cincinnati, I performed marriages in parking lots with 25 motorcyclists, including the bride and groom, on their bikes, who'd rev up their machines as I brought my robed arms down in benediction. I loved it all, and the fumes, and the roar as the bikers peeled off and sped up the highway. . . .

And officiating at holy unions for same-sex couples. I recall one lesbian service where some were men and vice versa, and all inter-racial, with stunning costumes and cosmetics and harp players and strange physicalities (one bridesmaid showed me her tattoo, a green, purple and roseate snake that went like a boa from her left shoulder all around her neck and down to her belly button). It was all a wild and dignified banquet of people I didn't know existed.

[*November 15, 1982*]

Chicago Sun-Times

Columnist Diane White pokes at and lampoons one of Hollywood's capital minds:

The first annual Tootsie awards are awarded to certain men in the public eye who deserve to be called Honorary Women.

. . . The Tootsie is given to a man who, in his efforts to understand and empathize with women, goes one step beyond and, in one or two cases, right over the edge. . . .

The Third Tootsie goes, appropriately enough, to Dustin Hoffman, who, after passing as a woman in the film that gave our awards their name, can't stop talking about how much he would like to be a woman. "I feel cheated never being able to know what it's like to get pregnant, carry a child and breast-feed," he told one interviewer. Hoffman also said the fact that he wasn't terribly cute in drag made him realize how rotten men can be. "It hit me when I realized I wouldn't take myself out or go to bed with me," he said.

[*February 22, 1983*]

Commonweal

Dr. Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr. assays the celluloid biography of a quack, and a vicious one at that:

Gandhi is the movie the British deserve about India, just as *Apocalypse Now* was the one we deserved about Vietnam.

[*January 14, 1983*]

The Washington Dossier

Miss Doris Deakin of *Dossier* magazine in a discourse on the difference between a mundane and memorable luncheon" divulges a populist favorite from Charles T. Manatt, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, the party with the big heart and the lumpen proletariat always in mind:

Californian Charles T. (Chuck) Manatt is chairman of the Democratic National Committee, so many powerful Democrats and fellow golden staters show up for lunch at his Georgetown home. He likes the West Coast style and so he asked Carl Longley, president of B&B, for a taste of home. In his 33 years of catering, Longley has done parties for Democrats—Truman and Kennedy—as well as for a California Republican named Reagan. His California menu costs $80 a person.

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Ginger Chicken Tenderloin
Salted Almonds
Cold Tomato Boullion with Sorrel
Grilled California golden Trout
(lemon caper sauce)
Asparagus Beurre Blanc
Chateau St. Jean
(1981 Fume Blanc)
Ruby lettuce and Watercress
(walnut oil dressing)
Glacéed Oranges with Candied
Orange Peel
Palmiers and Chocolate Truffles
Schramsberg Blanc de Blanc
Coffee

[*March 1983*]

Open Education Exchange
(Berkeley, California)

Dr. Stephen Weinreb, M.D., reveals the amazing results of his New Age researches:

I recalled the time I woke up with a fierce headache, and when nothing helped I went to the UC experimental pine grove on San Pablo Avenue and carefully selected a tree. Wrapping my arms around that pine I felt its strength on my body, and I fully opened my heart to its power. In a few moments my headache disappeared.

[*1983*]

Indianapolis Star

Euphuism launched to the farthest regions of the absurd by an adept of Molotov cocktail theology:

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is "abstract" to Americans, but to the poor in Latin America it is a political force, says an exiled Argentinian theologian.

That force, Dr. Enrique Dussel adds, is in conflict with American foreign policy in the region.

"The nails for the Cross of Jesus," he declared, "are 'Made in the USA.'"

[*April 18, 1983*]

Harper's

Flashes of apocalypse fired in the mind of Prof. Michael Howard as he exits the company of his he-man American friends:

Let me at this stage explain my own position. I am an Englishman whose youth was passed in watching the dreadful onset of totalitarianism in Europe, and whose young manhood was passed in fighting it. I am a professional historian who has spent the last thirty years studying the phenomenon of military power. I have noted the appetite of powerful states for more power to protect themselves, and the edge ideology can give to that appetite. I do not think I have any illusions about the Soviet Union. But when I hear some of my American friends speak of that country, when I note how their eyes glaze over, their voices drop an octave, and they grind out the words *the Soviets* in tones of gravelly hatred, I become really frightened; far more frightened than I am by the nuclear arsenals themselves or the various proposals for their use.

This attitude seems to arise less out of any objective assessment of Soviet capabilities, problems, and intentions than from a dark, visceral need to assert masculinity. It was this mood that brought British and Germans to fight one another in 1914: to show one another who was master. Whether I would encounter the same phenomenon in the Soviet Union, I do not know. But wars begin in the minds of men, and in many American minds the flames of war seem already to have taken a very firm hold.

[*February 1983*]

The Ann Arbor News

Three shapely feminist saints—somewhat hinged at the heels and allegedly homicidal—are stuffed and exalted by a hagiographer from the feminist fevers:

Three women have vaulted to notoriety through legal dramas in recent years: Jean Harris, the jilted murderer of her long-time lover; Roxanne Pulitzer, the errant wife of the Pulitzer heir; and Ginny Foat, head of California's NOW chapter, facing extradition charges to Louisiana on a 17-year-old charge of killing a man with a tire iron.

Beyond the issue of guilt or innocence, each of these women has touched the personal concerns of other women because each speaks to some aspect of the condition of women everywhere.

[*February 13, 1983*]

Daily Nation
(Nairobi)

A leading Third World beacon sheds its light on provinces that know not the wisdom of Alan Alda:

The brutal behaviour of the man who cut off both the ears and nose of his wife and got only two years imprisonment and five strokes is unfortunately not unique.

Many women, especially in rural Kenya ignorant of their rights, have accepted the role of beasts of burden assigned to them by their husbands.

Many uneducated African men honestly can hardly differentiate between a wife and a cow or any other inanimate possession. . . .

[*April 11, 1983*]

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"THE reference work on the subject for those committed to traditional moral values"

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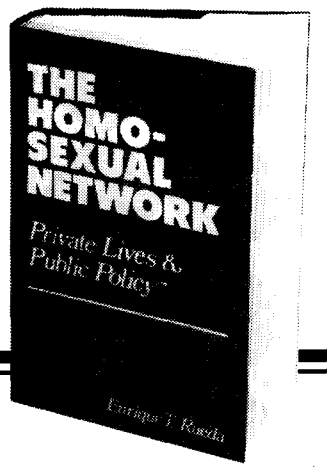
Special Assistant to the President



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Author Enrique Rueda is a priest who serves as director of the Catholic Center for Free Enterprise, Strong Defense, and Traditional Values. No Christian writer has ever given the subject this awesome coverage.

★ Tax-exempt and federal funds for homosexual groups. ★ "The degree of promiscuity ...defies the imagination of those not familiar with homosexuality." ★ Liberalism and the "gay-lib" movement: ties so binding that Rueda calls liberalism "part and parcel" of the movement. ★ Homosexual teachers unite in major cities. One talks about kissing his students. ★ The Catholic bishop who claims "gays" were condemned in the Old Testament for other than moral reasons. ★ Once a homosexual, now a Christian: it does happen, but the media look the other way. ★ The links between feminism and the homosexual ideology. ★ Sample the "Gayellow Pages." ★ How homosexual men transmit disease — often to the innocent. ★ HEW study finds acceptance of homosexuality a prime goal of most sex-ed programs. ★ Voting records of prohomosexual senators and congressmen.

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"As a Bible-believing Christian steeped in the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, I believe that homosexuality is a manifestation of the sinful condition that affects mankind and each man, and that homosexual behavior is gravely sinful by the very nature of reality...I do not advocate the persecution of homosexuals or their condemnation on account of their condition."

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72-page study-in-depth. Fr. Rueda expounds the Church's universal teaching on the subject, then explores the campaign to chip away at it. Prohomosexual Catholic groups, Dignity and New Ways Ministry...key staffer at U. S. Catholic Conference/National Conference of Catholic Bishops emerges as leader of Washington homosexual movement and president of Dignity chapter, without prejudice to his job...internal USCC pro-Dignity memo reproduced in full...mixed responses to prohomosexual legislation by individual bishops...16 bishops listed by New Ways for beneficial statements...Archbishop Weakland's ambiguous letter...Bishop Rosazza's letter endorsing ordination of homosexuals...New Ways source book on supporters: 77 dioceses, seminaries, schools, parishes, publications, theologians, etc....Dignity/New York sponsors Cabaret Night, a homosexual dance at St. Francis school auditorium — on Wednesday of Holy Week...Women's ordination and the homosexual movement ...prohomosexual writings by Catholic Theological Society and *Notre Dame Magazine*...Dignity chaplain reports that "25 percent of all priests in the Phoenix area are basically homosexual"...priest helps homosexual priests without condoning their practices — and is anathematized by prohomosexual Catholics... homosexual "marriage rituals"..."religious orders"...21 pages from *Communication*, underground newsletter by and for homosexual priests and nuns.

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